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# ARANYA

HYDERABAD BIRDING PALS | FRIENDS OF FLORA & FAUNA

Sighting of Jerdon's Baza | 200th bird walk celebration meet | Nesting of Black-naped Monarch

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HBP Birdwalks

# In this issue

The month of May was as usual as other months for HBP. Birdwalks started with the break of dawn and continued till the summer heats permitted. To the delight of members, Indian Pitta was seen in three of the four birdwalks conducted in this month. We conducted a much awaited trip to Maredumilli, a beautiful forest in Eastern Ghats. The three day trip gave us the sighting of Jerdon's Baza which eluded us for long time. On a personal trip to a water body near Hyderabad, one of our member saw Amur Falcon. It had a stopover on its way to the breeding grounds in South-Eastern Siberia and Northern China. A writeup on 200th bird walk celebration meet is included with photographs from the event. This month's What's in my camera bag is written by an eminent wildlife photographer, whose Tiger photos have earned acclaim.

Hope you find this issue interesting to go through. Feedback is welcome.

Happy Birding
Ajinkya Supekar

Hyderabad Birding Pals (HBP) is a group of bird watching enthusiasts based out of Hyderabad, united by a common love for birds. We organize free bird walks around the city of Hyderabad that are open to participation by all like-minded individuals. We are an informal group, who are passionate about bird watching and photography, learning about bird behavior (in the field) and doing our bit towards conservation of nature and its habitat as well. Do check our Facebook group to stay up to date on our bird watching events.

ARANYA

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# May Bird Walks

మంజీర మొసళ్ళ అభయారణ్యం-సంగారెడ్డి
కల్పగూరు
KALPAGOOR

**206th Bird Walk | Manjeera Dam**
**06th May 2018**

**207th Bird Walk | Maredumilli**
**13th May 2018**

## 208th Bird Walk | Ananthagiri Hills
## 20th May 2018

## 209th Bird Walk | Umamaheshwaram
## 27th May 2018

# Manjeera Dam Trip Report

**By Deepika Surya**

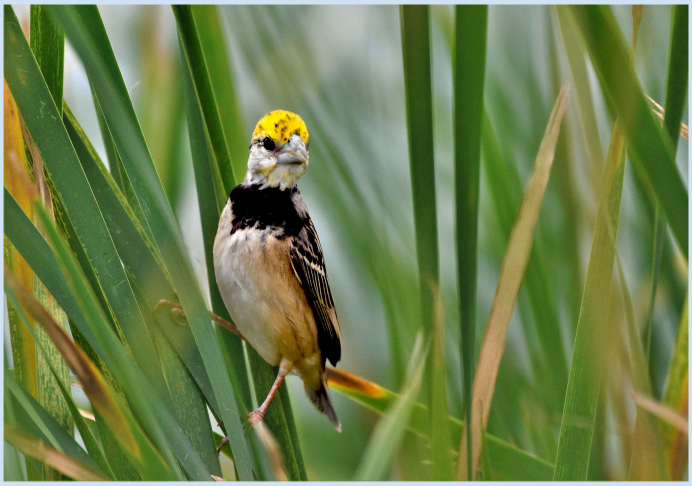
206th Bird Walk | Manjeera Dam
06th May 2018

Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary (17.65°N, 78.07°E) is a wetland sanctuary which is about 70 kilometres away from Hyderabad. Manjeera wildlife sanctuary consists of nine small islands which are home to a number of many residents and migratory birds in addition to muggers, where a breeding program is being carried out. It is internationally recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA) due to intense bird diversity. We were 15 participants for the bird walk that day. We gathered at 4:45 a.m. at Alwyn colony and we started by 5:00 a.m. This is my first experience with Hyderabad Birding Pals and I was quite excited to experience birding with them.

The roads were beautifully lined with paddy fields and good shady trees near Manjeera. We were split into 2 groups, and the first sighting I had was that of a Robin(male). Then, as we were moving slowly, we found a red-necked falcon. Unfortunately, the weather was very cloudy, and because of which we couldn't capture the bird, because of the low light. Later, a small bird caught our attention.

Manjeera Dam

It was an ashy prinia and following that was a purple sunbird.


Bengal Weaver (*Ploceus benghalensis*)
By Deepika Surya

While we walking around the lake area, we came across 20-30 black-breasted weaver birds. As we moved on, we got a sight of a purple moorhen, river tern, bronze-winged jacana, etc., which were seen by me for the first time, so I was in a state of joy! I also saw two white-breasted kingfishers, black-headed ibis, Eurasian coot, grey heron and pond heron, which made me more happy. I was happy to see the beautiful flying pattern of cotton pygmy goose. Later, Sarath babu sir demonstrated how to capture best photos with the help of his camera. We returned to our meeting point, where we saw a group of 20 egrets. From there, we started to Manjeera reservoir, and we began with Indian grey hornbill, which made me fly with joy. We captured a good photo of it, as it perched on top of the tree. Later, we got a good sighting of pied kingfisher, white throated kingfisher, brahminy kite and black headed ibis, which were in a group.

On the top of a tree, we saw a beautiful painted stork, which was as colorful as a butterfly. We even saw 2 to 3 peacocks, which were dancing and this was the best moment of this bird walk for me. Later, we gathered and discussed about all the species we got and at last, we listed up to 107 species. I want to personally thank Phani sir for giving this opportunity, which was very educative and I learned about many new species. Hope I will attend many more bird walks with this amazing team and get a good exposure to different avian species.

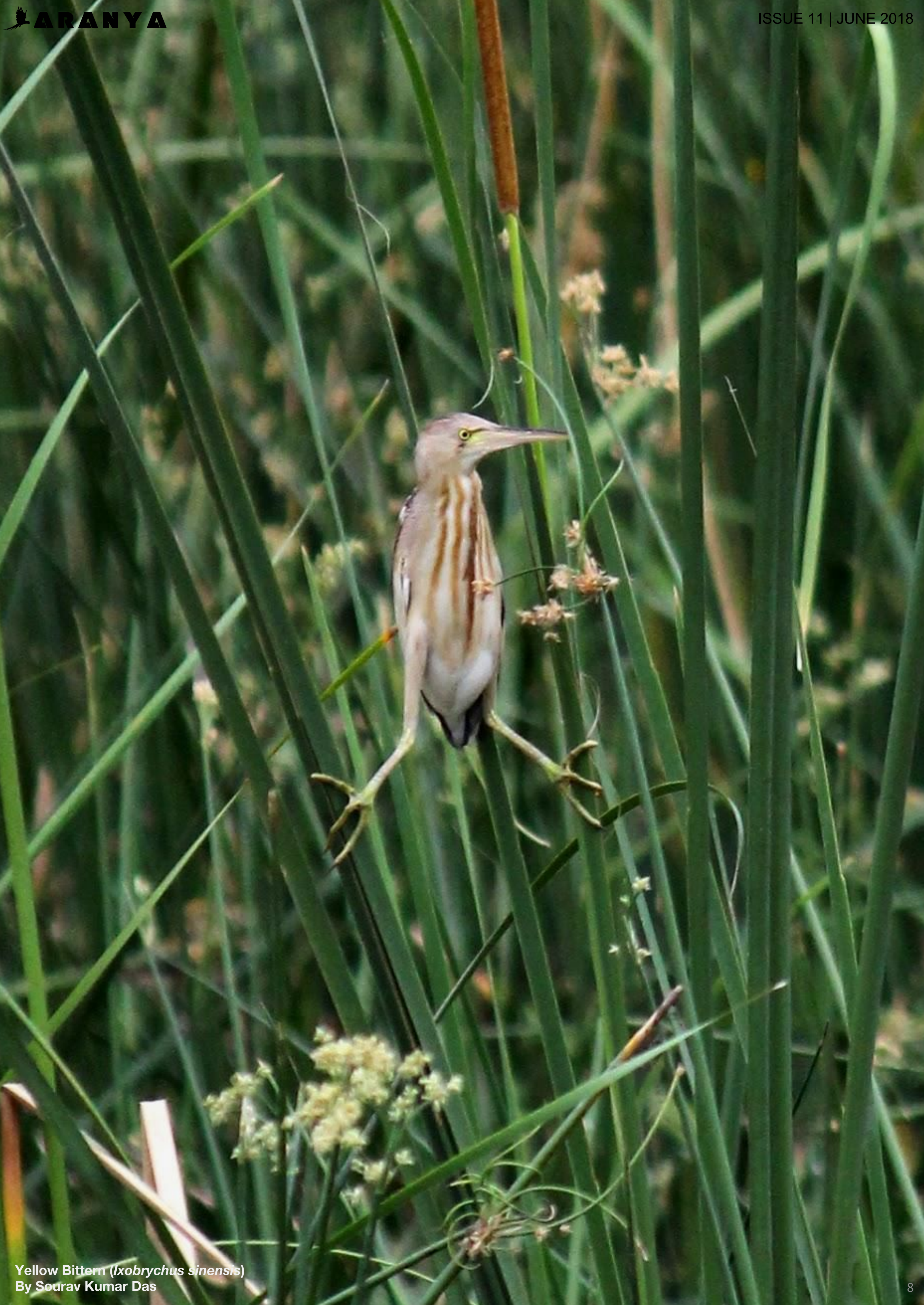
eBird checklist:

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45346744

Indian Gray Hornbill (*Ocyceros birostris*)
By Deepika Surya

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
By Deepika Surya

Gray-headed Swamphen (*Porphyrio poliocephalus*)
By Deepika Surya



**Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)**
**By Sourav Kumar Das**

# Maredumilli Trip Report

**By Manjula Desai**

207th Bird Walk | Maredumilli, AP
11th to 13th May 2018

I had heard a lot about Maredumilli from my birding friends and how much of a great place it is for bird watchers. I was naturally excited when I got to know that the 207th bird walk will be conducted here. I started preparing for the trip by scanning through old checklists on www.ebird.org , shared by my friends and made a “birds to watch out for” list of my own. Most of them were new to me, so almost everything on the list would be a “lifer”.

Maredumilli (17.59°N, 81.71°E) is a village in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh situated 80 km from Rajahmundry on Bhadrachalam road. It has a rich biodiversity, semi-evergreen forests with undulating terrain.

“The Eastern Ghats roughly north of Godavari river (and a tiny area on the southern bank in West Godavari district) are known to have avifauna quite distinct from the rest of the southern peninsula — though there are no reported endemics, this is an area where species with both Himalayan and peninsular Indian affinities co-exist. As per, some species are present here only as relict pockets, with nearest populations either in the Western Ghats or North-eastern India or both, which makes it all the more interesting.” says Mr. Sathyanarayana Srinivasan in his “Notes on some birds of the northern Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh”. Thus, this is an unique place for bird watching.

The Semi-evergreen forests with Bamboo and Conifer patches By Raghavarao Suryadevara

**Indian Pitta (*Pitta brachyura*)**
**By Subrata Kool**

A few members had started their trip on the morning of 10th May to reach early and rest for the night at the Bird's nest resort near Maredumilli. A few members left in the afternoon and stayed overnight near Bhadrachalam. A few members left by 5.30 p.m. and we (Sriram Reddy, Subrata Kool and myself) started our trip in Sriram's car at 19:00 p.m.

We stopped at "Food court 7" near Suryapet at 21:00 p.m. for dinner and caught up with others. Kishore Bakshi, Liju Kishore and a few others were done with their dinner and waited for us to finish. We started from there by 21:45 p.m. and drove till Bhadrachalam. We reached the city at 2:30 a.m. and rested in the car for a couple of hours. Around 4:00 a.m., we visited Mr Raghava Rao's room near Rajahmundry-Bhadrachalam highway to freshen up. While we waited for others in the parking lot, we spotted two Barn owls (Tyto alba) flying around. They were repeatedly spotted flying low, indicating a roosting place nearby. Around 4:30 a.m., we left the place and started driving towards Chinturu.

**Greater Yellownape (*Picus flavinucha*)**
**By Balakrishna Marar**

On the way, we heard calls of a Banded bay cuckoo and Indian pitta. We stopped at the side of a road, where the forest begins. It was already bright at 5:45 a.m. We could take a few record pictures of Indian pitta and Black-hooded orioles. We also saw Asian palm-swifts, Cinereous tits, Common mynas. eBird checklist: https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45649755

We stopped for breakfast at Chinturu at 6:00 a.m. About 19 of us present there. We had discussions about areas to explore on the way to Maredumilli. Upon driving further, we saw a Red jungle-fowl in a distance and also heard the calls. We stopped to notice a few more birds on the way. A Barred button-quail stood frozen on the road. We approached it quietly and it just stood there, gazing at us!

We spotted a few Indian pittas in the vicinity and heard calls of Jungle owlets and also sighted a Black-rumped flameback. A few more birds were sighted too: https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45649909

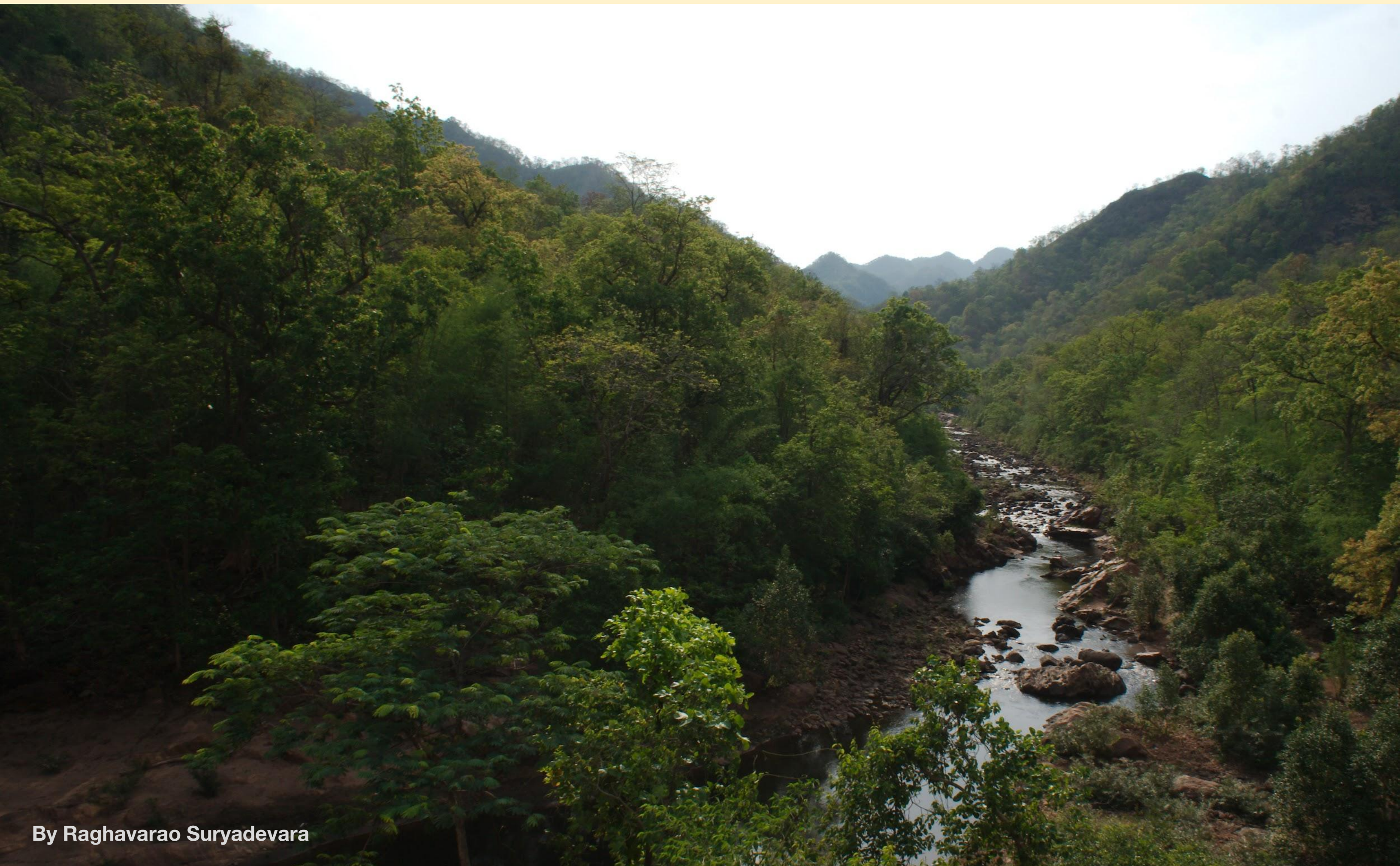
On the Rajahmundry-Bhadrachalam highway, we made a couple more stops to observe a few places. One of the stops, “Sokuleru Vagu” viewpoint was very scenic, but there wasn't much going on in terms of bird activity, so we took a few photos of the landscape and left the place within 15-20 minutes.

We came across a hotspot for woodpeckers next to a valley. We saw many woodpeckers flying about and also heard them drumming loudly. We drove further and found a patch with banana plants growing on the side of the road near the Tiger camp. We heard spider-hunter calls and spotted a couple of them. At the next stop, I walked alone to the left side of the road, while a group of members went to the right. I saw a red jungle fowl just about two feet away from me, it vanished into the thickets before I could lift my camera up! I spotted a speckled piculet, a brown-capped pygmy woodpecker and a white-rumped shama.

Later, we drove to a coffee plantation area and spotted Malabar trogons and several species of woodpeckers.
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45649936
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45650023
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45655198

At around 13:00 p.m., we reached the resort, had lunch and rested briefly and started our second session at 15:00 p.m. We drove the Maredumilli-Potlavada road. There are many channels running perpendicular to the road and we stopped briefly at each stream to examine the activity.

At the third bridge, I saw a Blue-bearded bee-eater for the first time! I was quite excited to spot it! We also saw orange-breasted pigeons, Oriental honey buzzard, greater racket-tailed drongo, Pin-striped tit babbler and many other birds.
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45726576



By Raghavarao Suryadevara

We called it a day by 18:00 p.m., because of the low light and lack of sleep the previous night and also because of the very hot and humid weather. A few friends got together in my room and we shared a few drinks and discussed the happenings of the day. We went on to meet with others outside at a bigger table, had a drink or two, discussed the plans for the next day, had dinner and retired.

By 4:30 a.m., the next morning, I woke up and got ready for the day. A few members arrived from Hyderabad that day and a local person, Mr Jimmy Carter and his son joined us too. He had previously gotten in touch with one of the HBP members and volunteered to show us around a few places where he had previously spotted Malabar pied hornbills. A few of us walked around the Bird's nest resort and spotted a few woodpeckers, barbets, flowerpeckers and kingfishers.https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S45758319

We left for breakfast at 6:00 a.m., and drove the Kutravada road in pursuit of the Malabar pied hornbills near Akumamidithota. One the way, we stopped near a series of streams again. At the first stream, I spotted a Crested goshawk and took a few pictures.

Many vehicles following our car stopped and took photos of the bird. We stayed there for some time and one of our team members, Gopal, spotted a few Brown-backed needletail birds and took record shots of the same.

At the third stream, as the previous day, we again spotted the Blue-bearded bee-eater landing on the branch of a tree next to the bridge and a few orange-breasted green pigeons flying about in a group.

**Brown-backed Needletail (*Hirundapus giganteus*)**
**By Gopalakrishna Iyer**

Later on, at a "Podu" cultivation site (these are makeshift, illegal fields cultivated by the tribals of a particular region. They clear off a forest patch by burning them down and grow a crop of their choice, suitable for that particular climate. After the harvesting is done, they abandon the field or some other tribe occupies it and continues to grow a crop of their choice https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podu_(agriculture) ), I spotted a bird in a distance, which turned out to be a Jerdon's baza! What followed after that moment was quite sensational! My birding partner, Sriram has described it in his own words in a separate article in this issue.

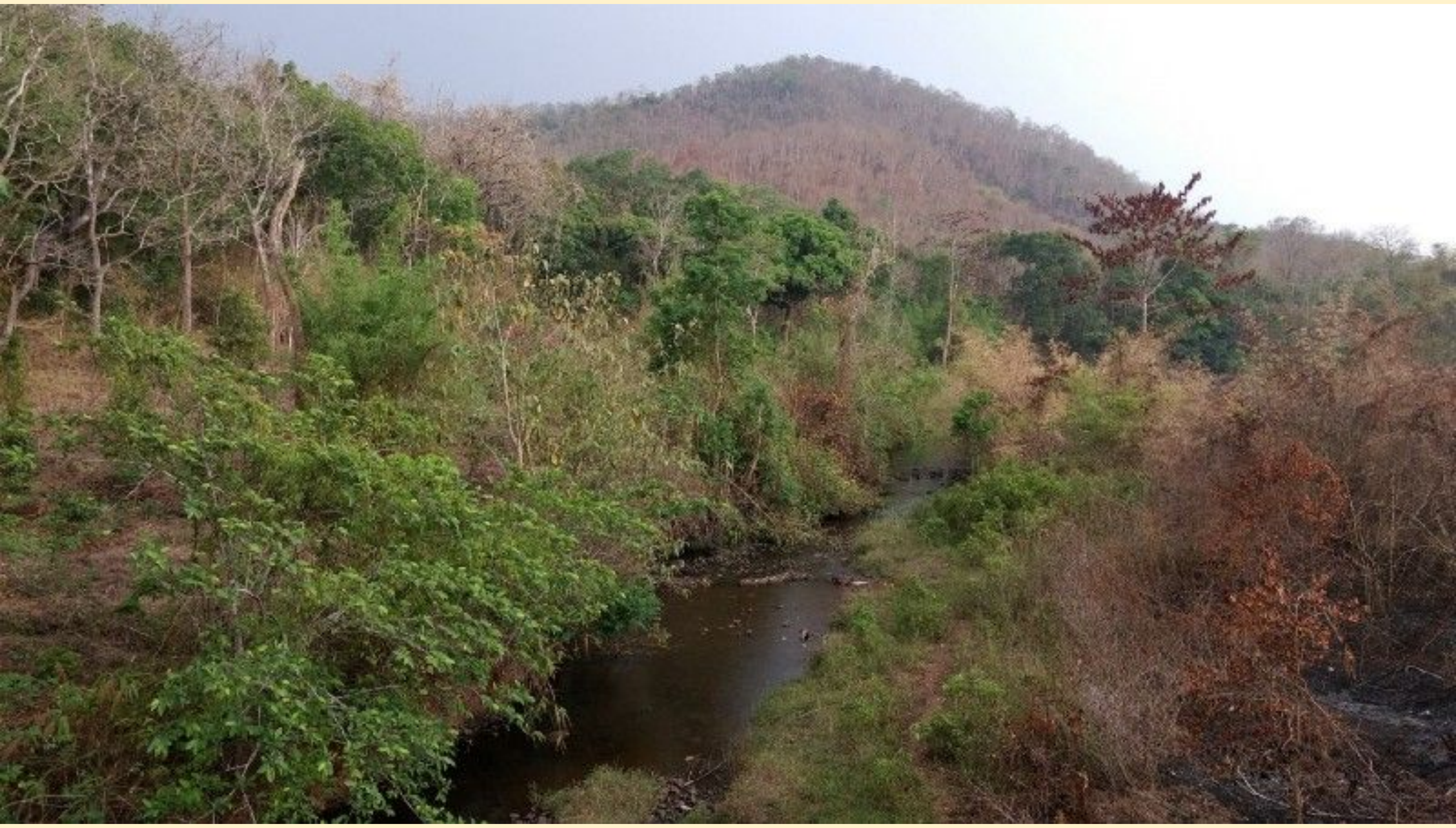
After that special sighting, we went on to look for Malabar pied hornbills with Mr Jimmy Carter. Although we couldn't find them, we spotted a few woodpeckers.

https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S45758307

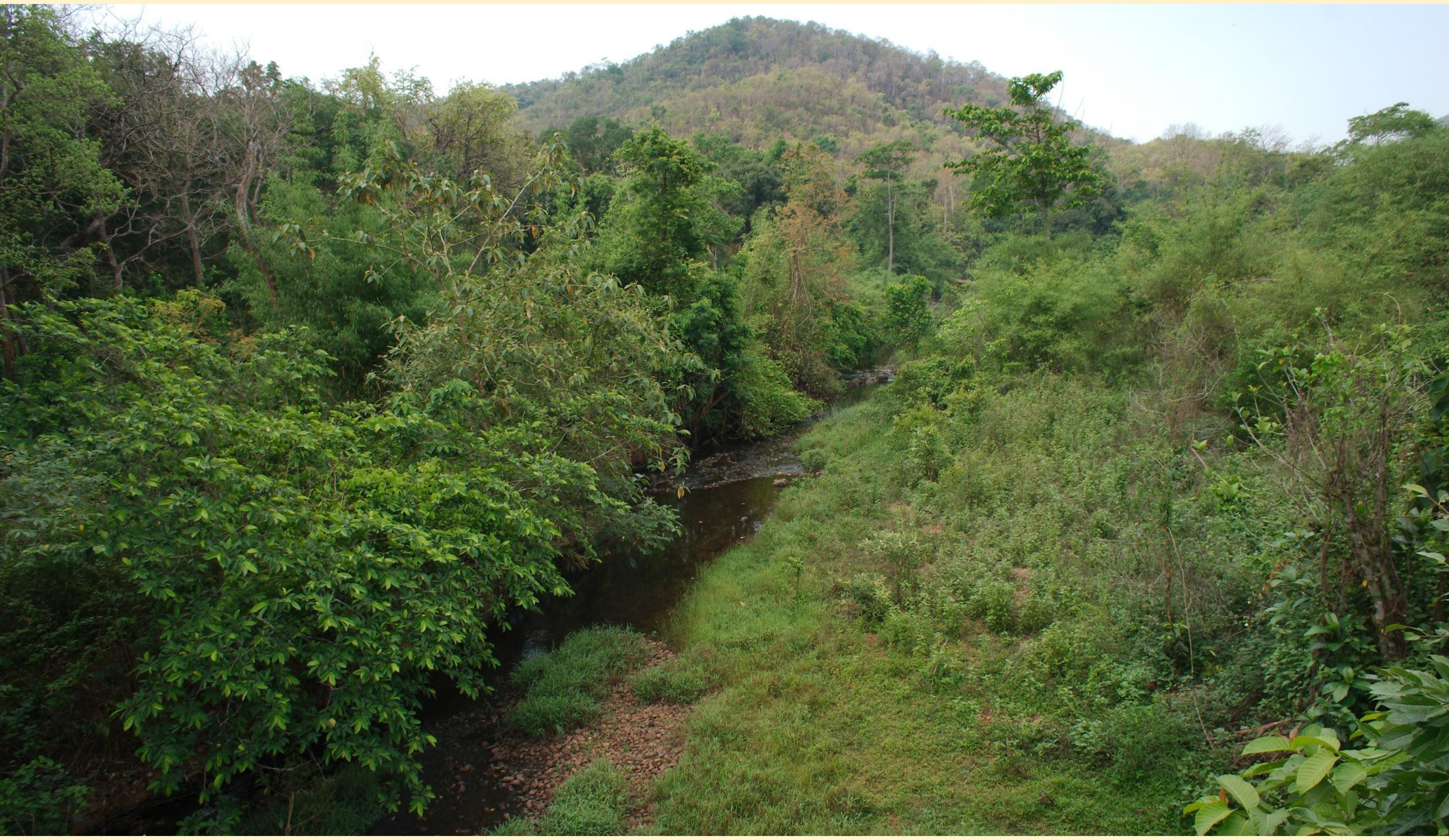
As we drove further, we spotted several raptors soaring high and low. Many Crested serpent eagles, Black Eagles, Crested Goshawks were flying in close quarters.

At around 13:00 p.m., most of the members returned to the resort for lunch, except for two vehicles, ours and Phani's.

## We noticed the forest was greener and denser this year as compared to last year.



**On 01st May 2017 By Ajinkya Supekar**



**On 12th May 2018 By Raghavarao Suryadevara**

We explored the tribal village of Akumamidithota by foot and learned about their lives and livelihood. (Kindly refer to Ajinkya Supekar's article in this issue).

After some time, their vehicle left too. Myself, Sriram, Jimmy Carter and his son stayed back to get a taste of the local toddy, sourced by the tribals. We relaxed next to a stream, while the tribal men got us fresh toddy from the toddy palm. We had a taste of it and carried it with us to the resort and shared it with a few members! These tribals were very friendly and approachable, as described by Jimmy Carter. It was a very unique experience for me, personally.

We dropped Jimmy Carter and his son to the resort, where they had parked their vehicle, said our goodbyes and went on for a late lunch. By this time, most of our team members had left for a second session of birding. We joined them right after lunch at the coffee plantation. We had a few decent sightings, but nothing of special mention, except for a couple of Malabar trogons.

https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S45758329

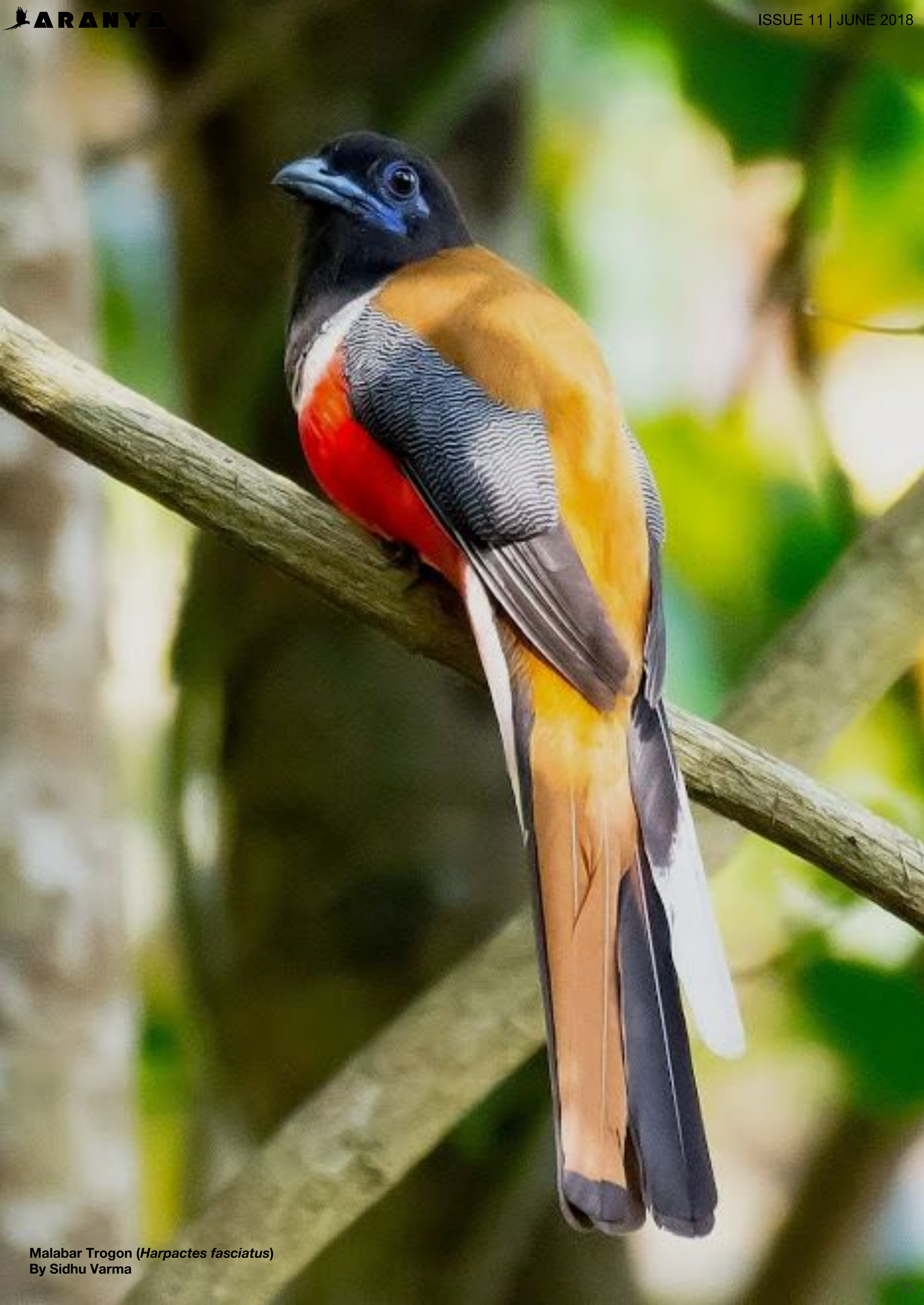
We visited the rubber nursery area at around 17:00 p.m. to get an idea about the activity. It was mentioned previously that a resort is being built in there and most of the trees were felled because of that. We didn't expect to see much, but to our surprise, there was a decent activity, despite of the drop in the number of trees, when compared to the previous year. Most of us went our own ways to explore. I found some Nuthatches, barbets, minivets, cuckoos and drongos. A checklist was not created, as we had planned to visit the same place in the morning with the entire group. We stayed till dusk and returned to the resort by 18:30 p.m.

We all got together for a round of discussion about the day with some refreshments. Liju Kishore and a few others pitched in some snacks. Vincent had prepared "bamboo-chicken" on a grill, which many members relished. There was a brief power outage, which gave us an opportunity to gaze at the starry sky! It was a breathtaking experience for me, since I don't get to enjoy it in a city with a lot of light pollution. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the darkness! We kept the lights off even after the power was back. Vikrant tried to keep us engaged with his merriness and we had some good time chatting up with everyone! We had some debates and brainstorms and I called it a night after some time and left for dinner. I got to hear in the morning that some dancing happened before dinner! Wish I had stuck around to see what really happened!

It was the last day of our trip. I was up by 5:00 a.m., freshened up and got ready to leave the resort. Most of us were all packed and assembled at the parking lot. A total of 29 members were present during this bird walk and it was now time for a group picture!

I wandered around the resort for one last time with my binoculars and walked to a stream near the other end of the resort. It was very quiet and peaceful there. A rubber tyre was hanging by a rope from a high branch and I sat there listening to the chirping sounds with my eyes closed for some time. It was almost time to leave!

We gathered again at the parking lot and left for breakfast in the village. We headed to the rubber nursery at 7:00 a.m. and spotted almost all the birds we saw the previous evening: https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S45758327



**Malabar Trogon (*Harpactes fasciatus*)**
**By Sidhu Varma**

While everyone was watching for birds in the gated area, I went across the road to explore a bit. I heard a strange new call! I wasn't really sure about what it was! I had listened to some calls online before the trip and tried to memorise them. This particular call seemed to match the call of an "Abbott's babbler" or at least what I thought it was or wanted it to be! Haha! I was quite excited to share this with the group! I recorded it and ran across the road into the rubber plantation. On the way, I ran into Kalyan and Arun and they listened to the call too. They did not confirm anything. I went ahead and met with Sriram and Sidhu. Sriram heard the call but denied it to be that of Abbott's babbler. I was quite adamant about it and went on to believe that it was in fact an Abbott's babbler! Later on, we heard similar calls in the rubber plantation area and it turned out to be a Brown-cheeked fulvetta! We all had a good laugh about it! The positive side of it, however, is that I will never forget the call of an Abbott's babbler!

Well, after that episode, we went on to a new place - Jungle star resort. The main entrance was not open so we took a different route towards the stream. We all split up and I, as usual, went on my own! The landscape was beautiful down there, but the activity was almost next to nothing. It was getting crowded with picnickers. The temperature was soaring high by 9:00 a.m. We left the place soon and drove towards Amrutadhara waterfalls. It was too crowded there as well, and no scope for watching birds. We stayed there for about 15 minutes and went ahead. We stopped at several places on the way where we spotted woodpeckers, Hair-crested drongos and Greater racket-tailed drongos.

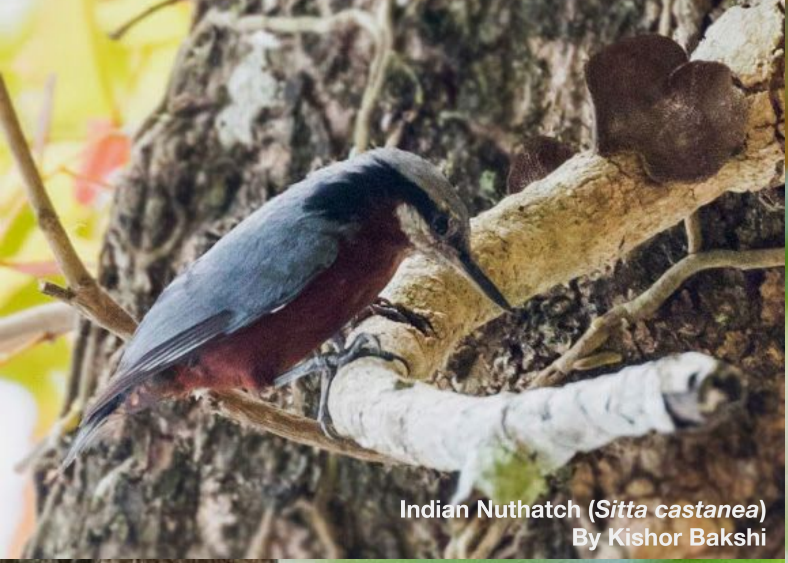
A few cars went ahead of others. Our car stayed behind and drove slowly, exploring the route.

We pulled over next to a small stream with some banana plants growing on the other side. We expected to see some spiderhunters and it was not disappointing! We spotted at least two of those! In addition to that, we saw the nesting of a Black-naped monarch couple! It was quite a sight to behold! We took many pictures from far and watched them build a nest together! It was very heartwarming! My day was made with it. https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S45758315

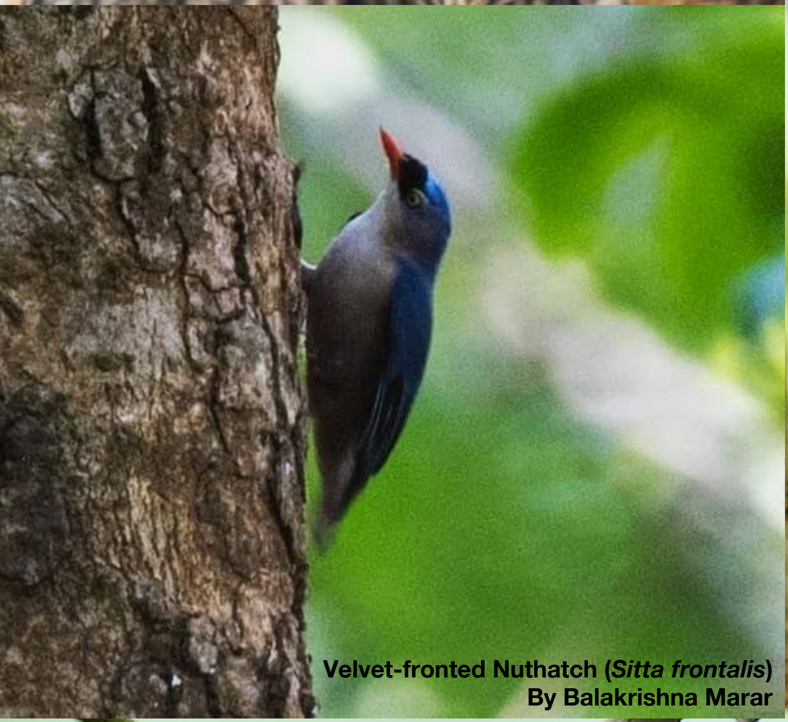
All the members had gathered for lunch at a restaurant called Haveli at Khamman and were almost done with, when we reached them. We bid adieu to everyone and started driving towards Hyderabad.

We caught up with Phani's car at 'food court 7' again, while we stopped for a coffee break near Suryapet.

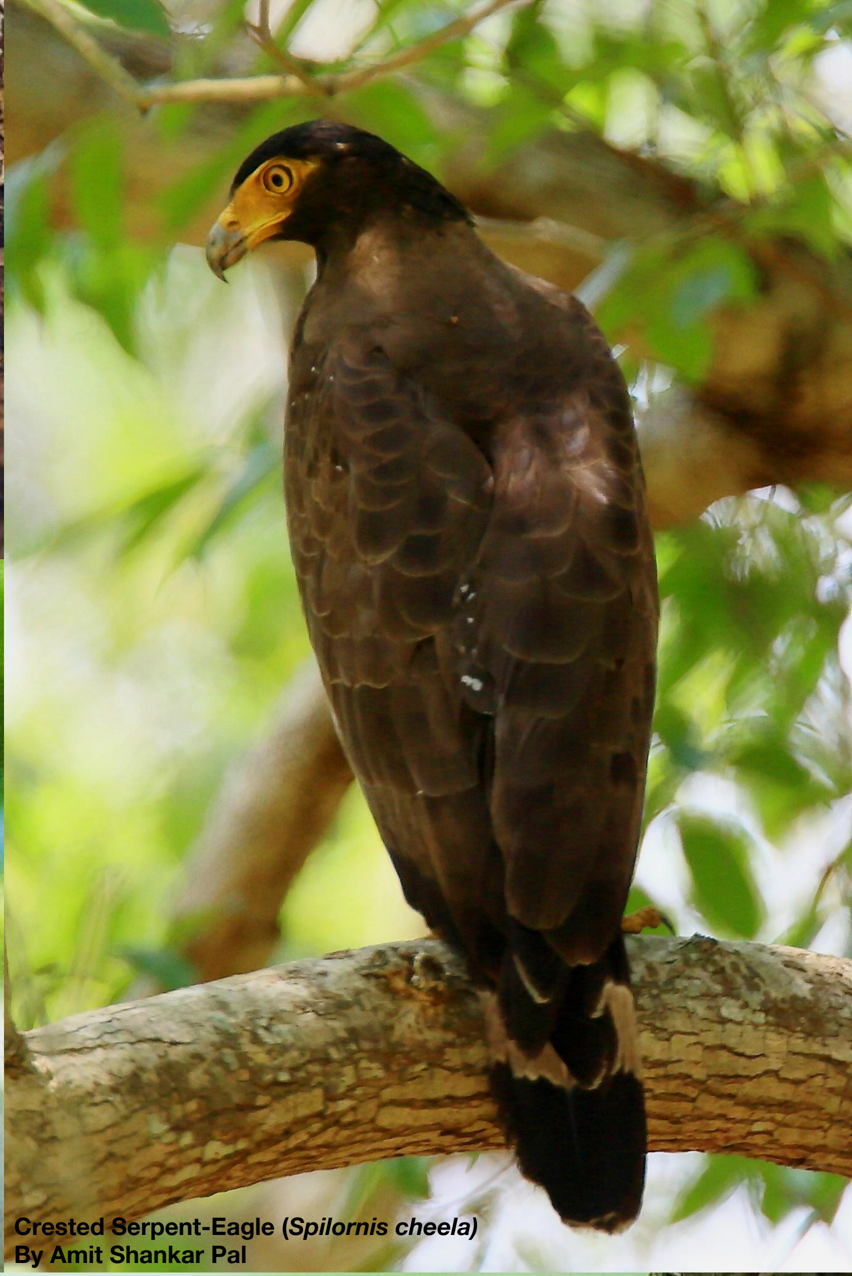
This trip turned out to be a very educational one for me. I learnt a lot about the Eastern ghats, which I was not at all familiar with. The tribal life and wildlife was very interesting and quite different than what I had anticipated. I am thankful to all the HBP members for making this trip possible! A big cheers to everyone!



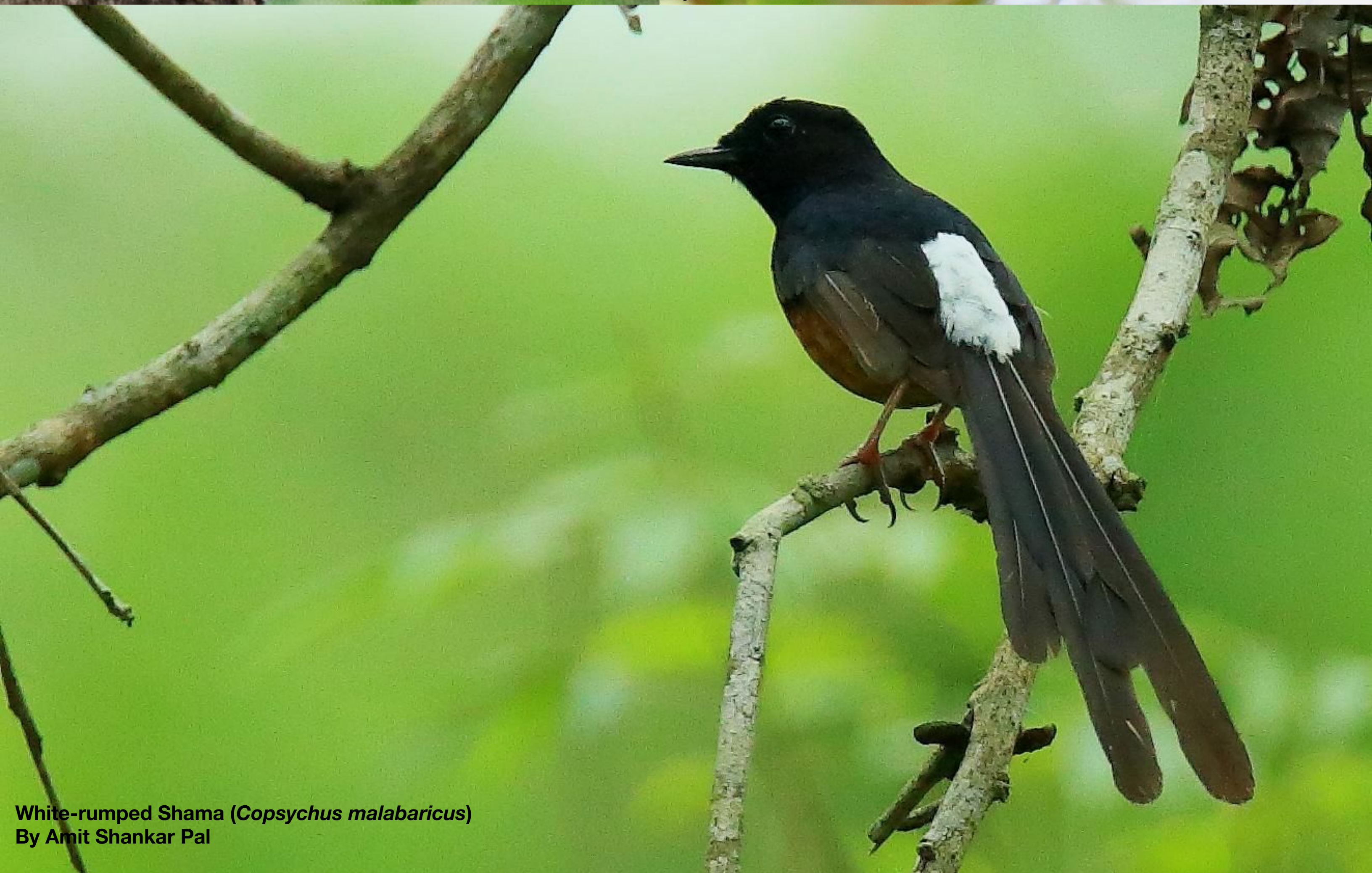
Indian Nuthatch (*Sitta castanea*)
By Kishor Bakshi



Velvet-fronted Nuthatch (*Sitta frontalis*)
By Balakrishna Marar



Crested Serpent-Eagle (*Spilornis cheela)*
By Amit Shankar Pal



White-rumped Shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*)
By Amit Shankar Pal

# Ananthagiri Hills Trip Report

**By Bhaarat Vyas**

208th Bird Walk | Ananthagiri Hills
20th May 2018

Greetings to HBP Members!!!

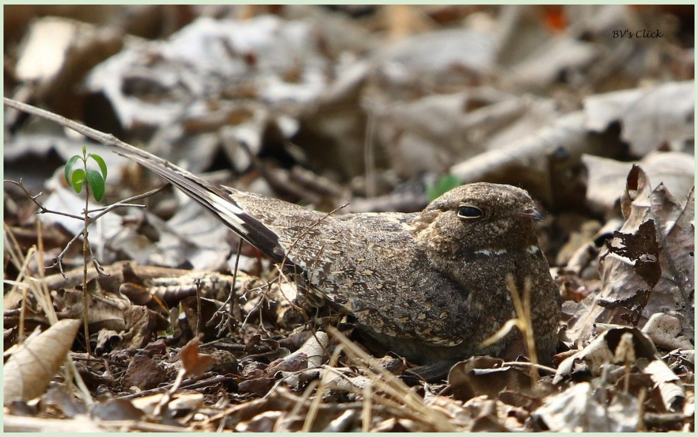
Ananthagiri Hills (17.31°N, 77.86°E) is located at Vikarabad district of Telangana. It is almost 82 kms away from Hyderabad. Ananthagiri is famous for hills, waterfalls, temples and forest area. It is also the birthplace of Musi River which flows through Hyderabad. Ancient caves and medieval fort structure and temple show the antiquity of this area. We can also describe Anathagiri as “Woodnote”.

As our regular practice the meeting place decided was near APPA Junction. Gradually members started coming to meeting point. We were having breakfast and tea; some members joined late for snacks too, few of the members were furious that – today it is getting too late as it was already 0715 hrs. We reached Ananthagiri around 0800 hrs. Few of the HBP members were already present.

As soon as we parked our vehicle we saw Indian Grey Hornbill, Jungle Babblers, Common Mynas, Coppersmith Barberts and other species too. Members started photographing the species there itself as now new and new members are joining regularly in Bird Walks.

Later all were guided to regular route and started looking for species. Phani leads the team and looking for Coppersmith Barbets, Tawny-bellied babbler, Oriental Magpie Robin, Orange-headed Thrush, Common Tailorbird, Rufous Treepie, Spot-breasted Fantail and many more.

As a tradition we all gathered for group photograph before commencing the walk. The numbers were large this time almost 23 bird walkers participated in the bird walk. So we sat on the wall for the group photograph and in that Majula Desai told that she sighted Nightjars. So, all the participants were very excited and eager to see Nightjars. Single group becomes groups and spread into different directions.



**Savanna Nightjar (*Caprimulgus affinis*)**
**By Bhaarat Vyas**

This time, I thought of not to leave Phani and will be with him till the walk ends. We saw Orange-headed Thrush on the ground, Indian Paradise Flycatcher (Rufous Morph) and Phani was also guiding the behavior and habitat of birds. So, it was really a great learning with sighting too. As we move forward we saw Jerdon’s Leafbird, Black-headed cuckooshrike, Common Hawk Cuckoo and in between Phani was iterating that- Pitta Dekhna Hai!!! Phani was very confident regarding the Pitta sighting.

We came to place where HBP had seen Sirkeer Malkoha in previous walks; but unfortunately we couldn't sight it.

**Green Warbler (*Phylloscopus nitidus*)**
**By Suman Bhattacharjee**

We went some distance and later Phani told to return. It was really a very hot day and Mangesh has already given-up. He was telling to Raju Sir and myself that – "Yaar ab to Buddha ho gaya hun, aur mat chalao". While we were returning, Phani shouted Pitta….Pitta. Later he pointed us the location and it was a delight for all of us to sight Pitta. We had a nice snaps too and that in open perch. Later Pitta flew-off and we tried to follow it. While following we saw Barred Buttonquail and later we saw two Savanna Nightjars again a lifer for all of us, had very good sighting as well as close snaps. But "Ye Dil Mange More", we thought of sighting Jungle Nightjar and we heard tek….tek….tek….sound, it is definitely as woodpecker. In one of the Eucalyptus tree a pair of White-naped Woodpecker was making the sound. Phani quickly ID'ed the species and the position was really a photographer's delight too. After looking the Mr. & Mrs. Pecker, they flew little far and met one of the group; they all were busy taking photographs and were very delighted. It was like dream come true for our group too. Later we saw Jungle Nightjar and that too very close distance. Though our group couldn't take the photographs but we saw the Nightjar and it flew away due to more human activity.

So, while returning we saw a White-eyed Buzzard, Indian-paradise Flycatcher (Rufous Morph), Orange-headed Thrush, White-bellied Drongo, Common Iora, Black-naped Monarch, Indian Golden Oriole and Oriental White-eye etc.

Trip always ends with lovely snacks and candies along with the discussion regarding the sightings, few special one's too and some lighter moment with Sidhu; all were exhausted due to extreme heat.

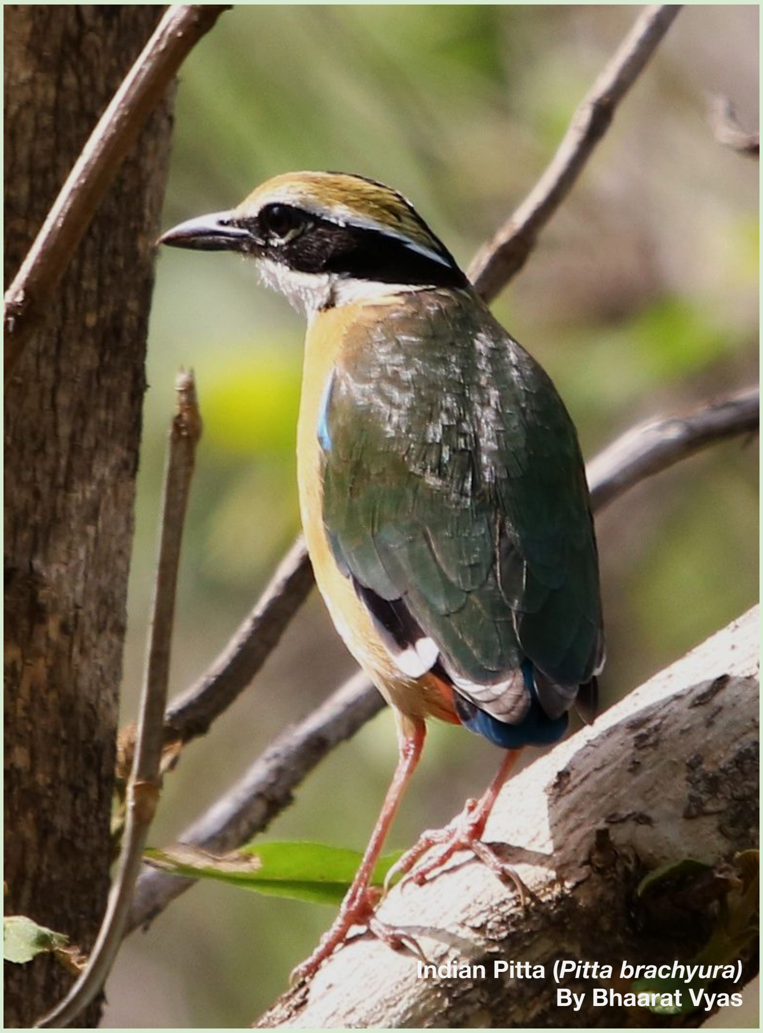
**White-naped Woodpecker (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*)**
**By Bhaarat Vyas**

Later one of the group stay back along with myself, had a small but good session at one of the big Banyan tree; where-in Large Cuckooshrike, lots of Coppersmith Barbets, Greenish Warbler, Small Minivets, Jungle Babblers, Asian Koel, Rufous treepie, Grey Hornbill, Tickell's Blue flycatcher, Shikra. All the photographers enjoyed the small session and Mangesh had a good nap. Again after that small session we had biscuits and cold drinks and wind-up for the day.

So, this how we called our day and almost 75 species were sighted. Trip report cannot be concluded without the saying- "The forest is a quit place if only the best birds sings and the earth has music for those who listen".

eBird checklist:

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45850739



Indian Pitta (*Pitta brachyura*)
By Bhaarat Vyas

Jungle Nightjar (*Caprimulgus indicus*)
By Dasari Vijay

# Uma Maheshwaram Trip Report

**By Sourav Das**

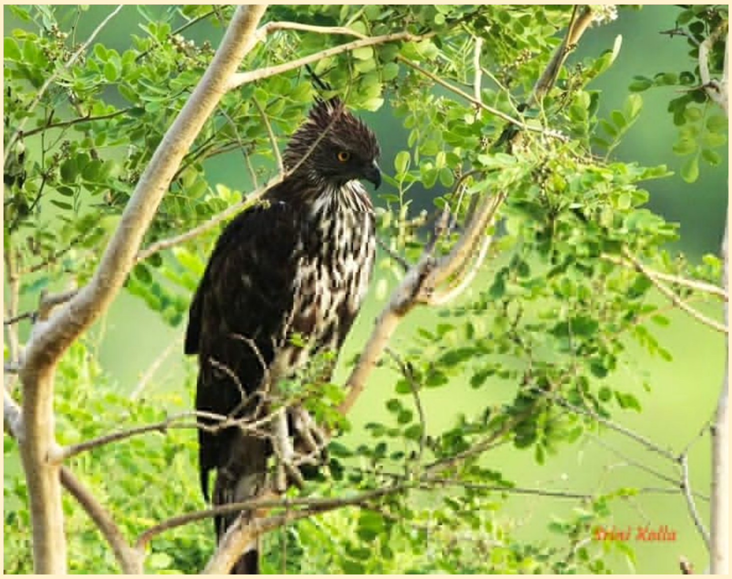
209th Bird Walk | Uma Maheshwaram
27th May 2018

Though summer is on and the days are hot; on a weekend, nothing can stop a birdwatcher to jump off the bed early morning and go out for birding, especially when it is with a group like HBP. Umamaheswaram (16.22°N, 78.43°E) is a location that makes you feel like you are in a bird studio. A place which always surprises every birder.

I am an amateur and new to the group. This was probably my 14th bird walk with HBP. I enjoy birding at all locations and when it's a place like Umamaheswaram, I cannot afford to miss the birdwalk.

I mostly get car pool from Phani Sir and this time the same happened with one more member Jagdish bhai. We started our 150 km trip at 4:00 a.m. in the morning from hyderabad. That day attendance was around 27. Experts, newcomers and new young birders joined that day and forming carpool everybody had a meet up at ORR exit where we gathered and continued out trip. The weather was pleasant and that day we did not have a breakfast stop and directly reached the location at 6:30 a.m.

Getting down the vehicle everybody were busy with their camera set up and some had already started their birding. Just after few minutes me and almost everybody had our first big sighting. It was the Crested Hawk-Eagle *(Nisaetus cirrhatus)* perching on a tree top which was at eye level to us. everybody took plenty of snaps and I got my closest encounter with that raptor.



**Crested Hawk-Eagle (*Nisaetus cirrhatus*)**
**By Srinivas Kolla**

It is a cliff side portion where the temple resides and below is the forest area. .Everybody started exploring different places depending on their search preferences. Partnered with Soumyajit Bhai who guided me to few places and we caught sight of birds naming yellow throated bulbul, brown headed barbet, black hooded oriole, loten's sunbird, rufous treepie, red rumped swallow. Had good snaps of the oriole and the barbet with good poses.

Then we moved towards the parking area where Phani sir sighted the short toed snake eagle with a catch. That day, I was in search for the blue capped Rock thrush and the Blue rock thrush for taking good photos and continuously checking with everybody if someone had sighting of that bird. Unfortunately no one did. But was also in search of the painted spurfowl which few people saw it and took good photos also. I was again unfortunate. We moved towards the area where small streams of water flow from cliff and birds normally come down to drink water.

That day it was a crowded area with we biders and people who came to visit the temple so the activity was little less. I found the Common tailorbird and oriental white eye there. Suddenly, Kalyan sir came showing the puff throated babbler pics. Me and some others went to get some photos of our own. We found the bird and it was patiently popping here and there when everybody took some time to get good pics of that bird.

**Painted Spurfowl (*Galloperdix lunulata*)**
**By Manjula Desai**

Then we gathered there to take the mandatory group photo. Some members were scattered here and there so we waited for them to come. Sriram reddy, Manjula Desai, and Sidhu who were doing birding at a distant place missed the group photo. They joined us with sighting news of Sirkeer malkoha and striking photo of Indian nightjar taken by Sriram bhai. Other than indian nightjar, Jerdon's nightjar calls were heard by some people before dawn.

We continued our birding. I saw open perch of an Emerald dove and took good photos there. We all moved towards the parking area once again where few red rumped swallows were drinking water at ground level. We all down to earth people went down to take ground shot of the bird and almost everybody got nice pics of it. Meanwhile, the Short-toed snake eagle gave another sighting and perched on a tree top.

Along with that, some commoner like the red vented bulbul, Jungle babbler, Oriental magpie robin, White-browed bulbul, Purple-rumped sunbird were also there. Last but not the least, Indian cuckoo was sighted by Manik Lal Dutta. With this, ended our Umamaheswaram birding trip for the day. But, we planned to visit Amrabad tiger reserve which is some 20 km away from Umamaheswaram. Before we went there, we had breakfast on the way and continued our trip to Amrabad.

Be warned when you do birding during this kind of summer conditions, ur clothes need to be full pant and full sleeves shirt or T-shirt with light colour. Besides that you should intake as much water and energy drinks you can to keep yourself hydrated.

***

We reached Amrabad tiger reserve around 11:30 a.m. and by taking permission, we entered the area for safari. Because of the shortage of canters not everybody could go for safari. Some people went to Octopus viewpoint and the rest packed in 2 Gypsy rode to Farahabad viewpoint which is in Amrabad tiger reserve. On the way, we saw Black-rumped flameback, Rufous treepie which some newcomers enjoyed taking photos of. I sighted an oriental honey buzzard which was on a clear open perch. Few people got down the gypsy and took awesome pics. But, it was not used to people, so it flew away when we started talking. We saw a raptor fly just in front of our vehicle. We were confused between shikra and goshawk.

It was very hot and sunny, still we were in a hope of sighting jungle owlet which resides near the view point as told by Phani sir. But, unfortunately near the viewpoint, I ended up with just a couple of black hooded orioles, pretty sharp calls of indian pitta and calls of common hawk cuckoo. On our way back, we saw a beautiful Shikra in breeding plumage just 20ft away and few of us took beautiful pics there. Also, we saw one big raptor which flew again in front of our vehicle. This time, it was confusing between Oriental honey buzzard and Crested hawk eagle. This was the end of our birding day trip.

This was a great trip for me because whatever I experienced that day, I did it with my new Sigma 150-600mm lens which was out for the first time. So, it was a beautiful experience with about 5 raptors and many good shots.

A total of 72 species were sighted by all the members.

eBird checklist: https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S46088701

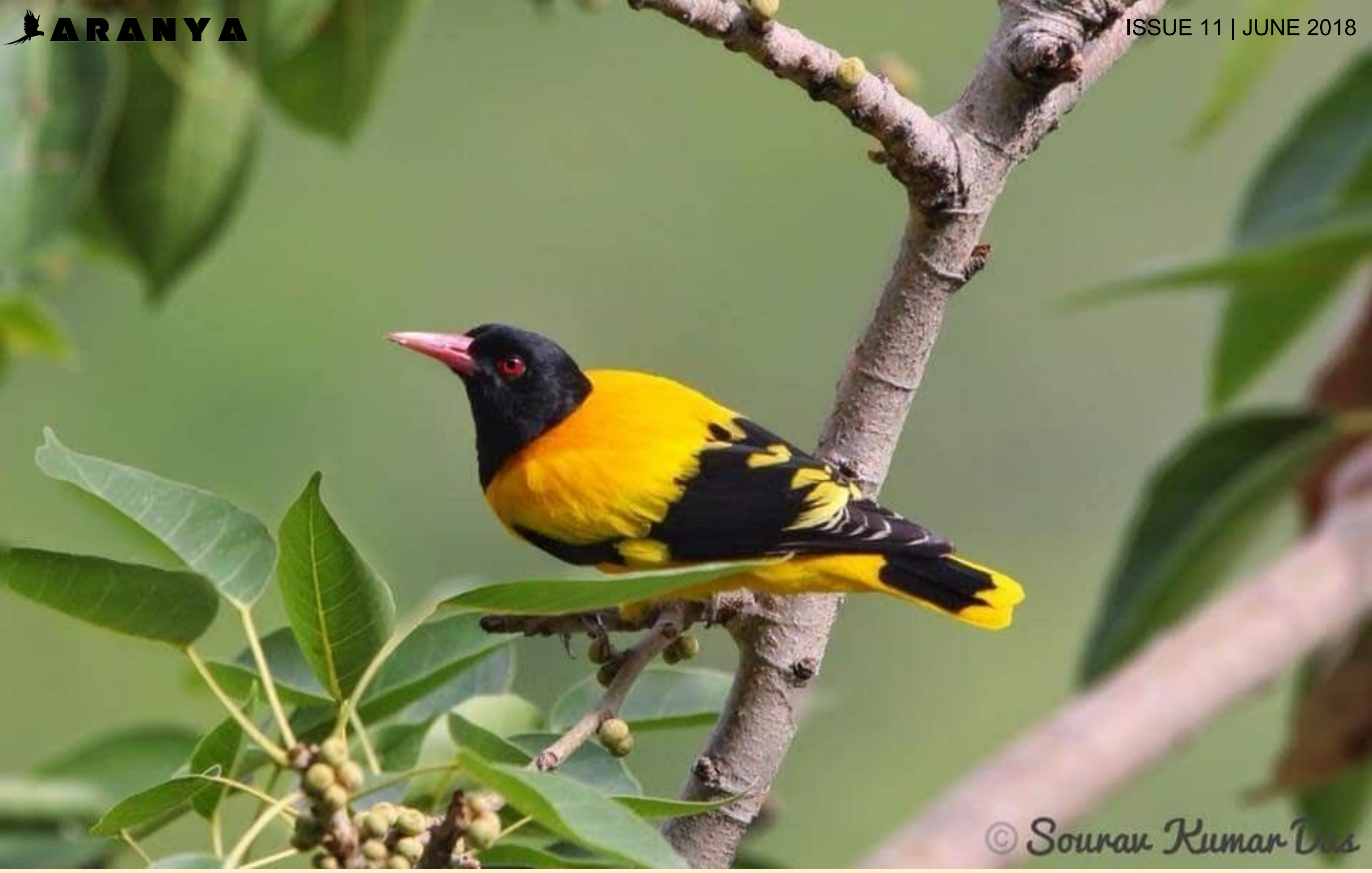
Brooklyn PlayBox

**Asian Emerald Dove (Chalcophaps indica)**
**By Suman Bhattacharjee**

**Sirkeer Malkoha (*Taccocua leschenaultii*)**
**By Manjula Desai**

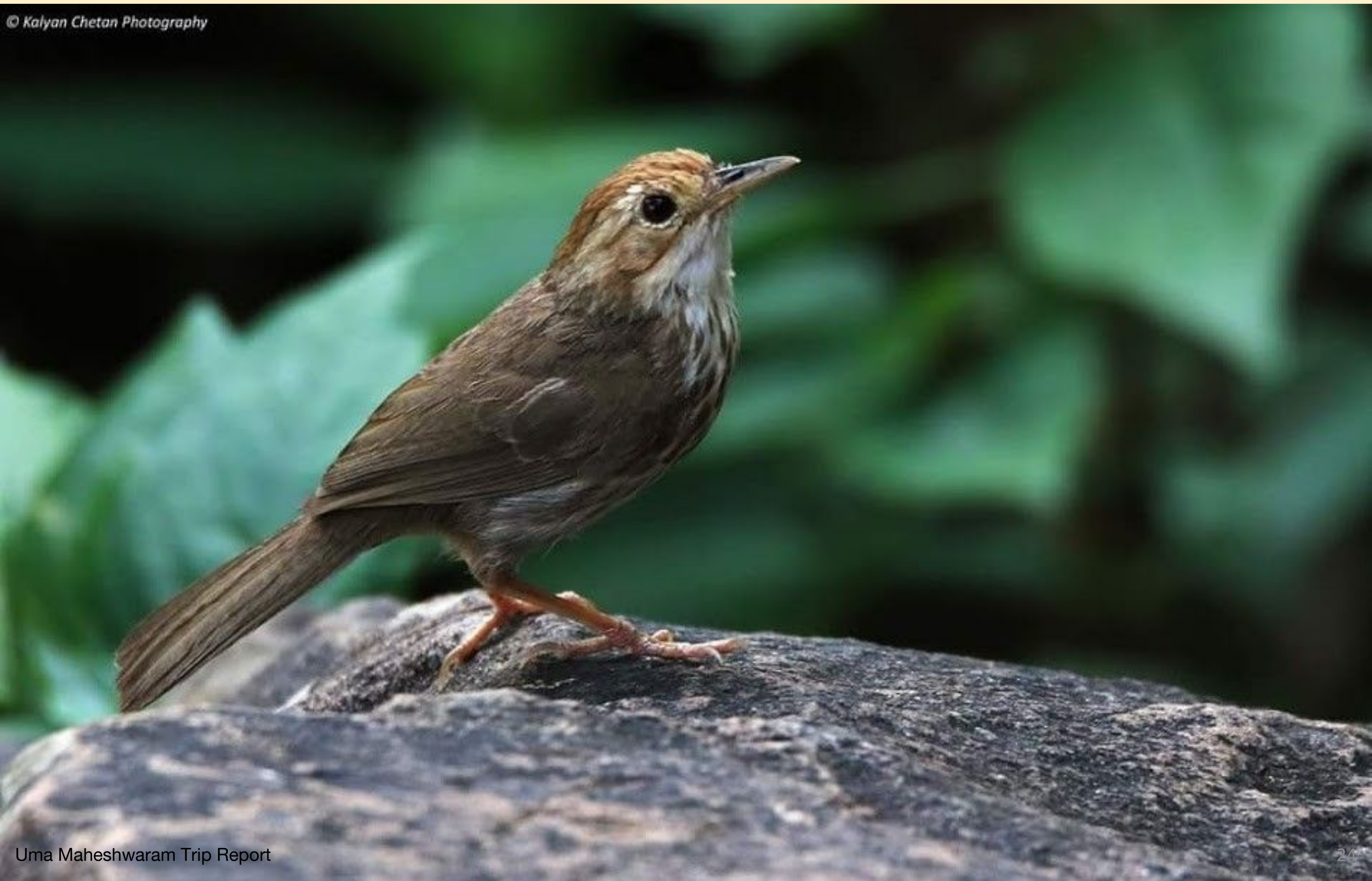
© Kalyan Chetan Photography

**Indian Pitta (*Pitta brachyura*)**
**By Kalyan Ineni**


© Sourav Kumar Das

**Black-hooded Oriole (Oriolus xanthornus)**
**By Sourav Kumar Das**

**Puff-throated Babbler (Pellorneum ruficeps)**
**By Kalyan Ineni**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# People of Maredumilli and Birds

### By Ajinkya Supekar

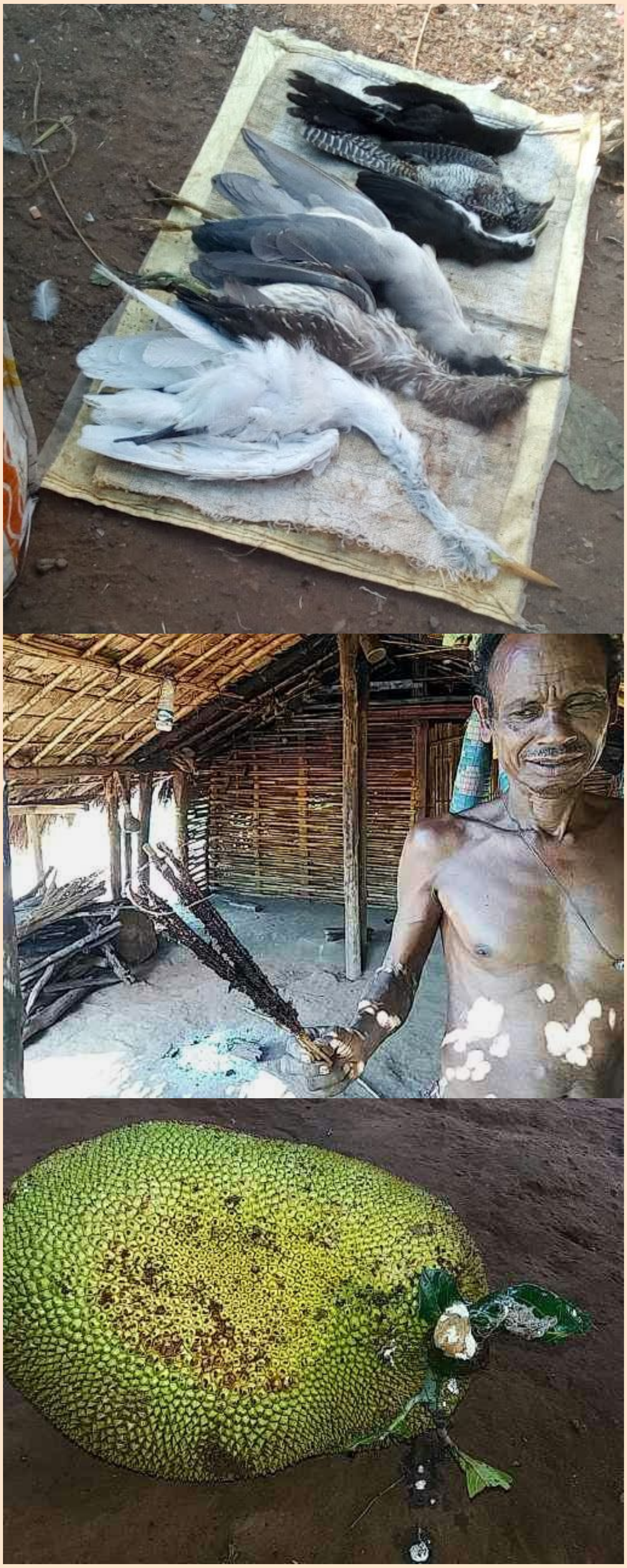
On the 207th bird walk to Maredumilli, some of us went with a local guide- Jimmy Carter, in search of Malabar Pied Hornbill. We reached a tribal village deep in the forest. From here, we were taken to a short hike to a hill. The village supposedly of a certain Konda reddi tribe, boasted beautiful huts and a pleasant, laid-back life. It made me curious about these people and the role birds play in their lives.

Konda reddi tribe is a dominant tribe in this region. Others being, Valmiki, Konda kamara and Bhagata. Etymologically, “Konda” means hill and “Reddi” means headman in Telugu. They call themselves Pandava Reddi, after the five pandava brothers, the great heroes of the epic “Mahabharata”, from which they trace their descent.

Apart from consuming rice and millets, they consume all kinds of meat, except beef. Birds are on the menu too. We were told that tribals can consume birds of any kind. They employ a technique to capture small birds that involves making them stick on Jackfruit sap-coated sticks. Large birds are brought down by using bow and arrow.

We were shown broom making and pineapple cultivation as the primary resource of their livelihood. The broom sticks were spread along the road in the village.

Increased influence of modern life has started to impact the lives of these people, for good and for bad.



# Life of locals

© Ajinkya supekar

# Sighting of Jerdon's baza *Aviceda jerdoni*

**By Sriram Reddy**

### The Conclusion

"Wait! I saw something! Can you go back, please?" Manjula said. I reversed my car and she took a picture of a bird, sitting very far, on top of a tree and showed it to me and said "What is this bird? Looks like a Crested hawk-eagle?" I had a look and replied "It's a Jerdon's baza!!!" The next moment, Manjula and Subrata jumped out of the car to have a closer look at the bird and I am in a state of shock and wanted to make sure if it is in fact a Jerdon's baza! I approached  Gopal, Phani and Ajinkya, who were following our car. "No, it's a Shikra", "No, no..it's a Jerdon's Baza", were our initial reactions and there was some confusion because of the excitement. Gopal took a picture and we looked for pointers and we all concluded it as Jerdon's Baza. I was like, "Yes!!! I finally saw Jerdon's Baza!!!" A sighting, that gave me a feeling of a great achievement and relief, as I was desperately searching for this bird since the last 3 years in and around Maredumilli region. A memorable sighting, that I will cherish for a long, long time!

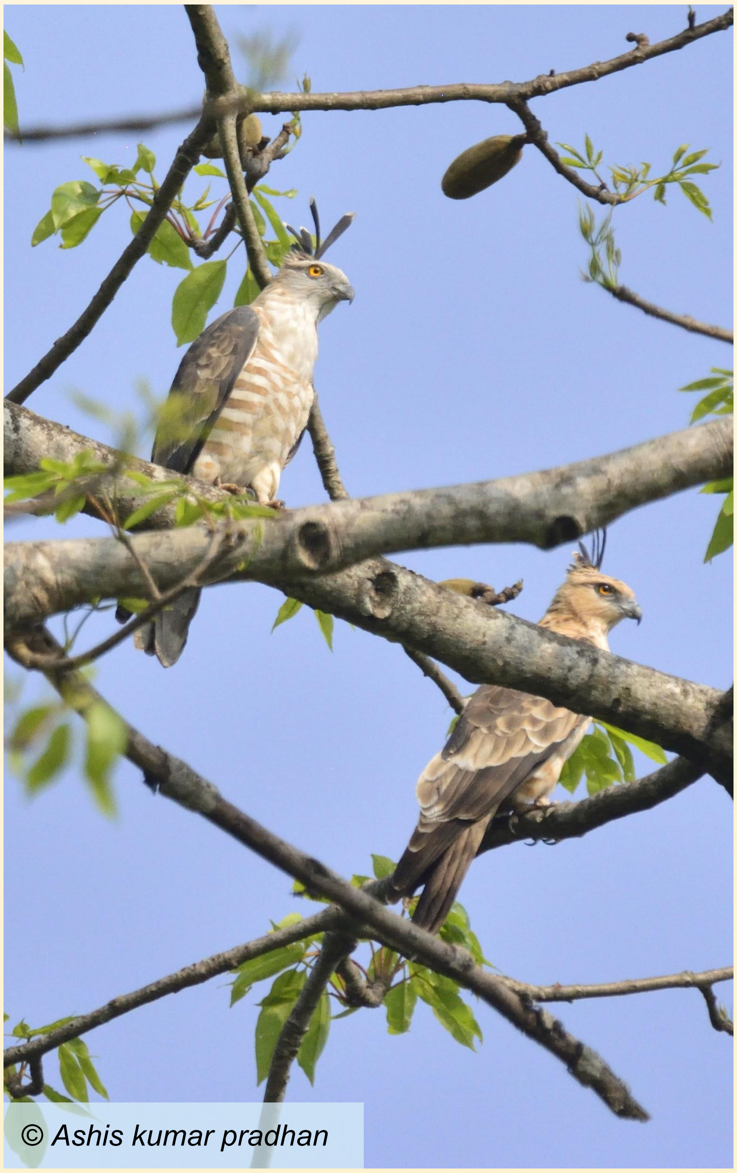
### The Beginning

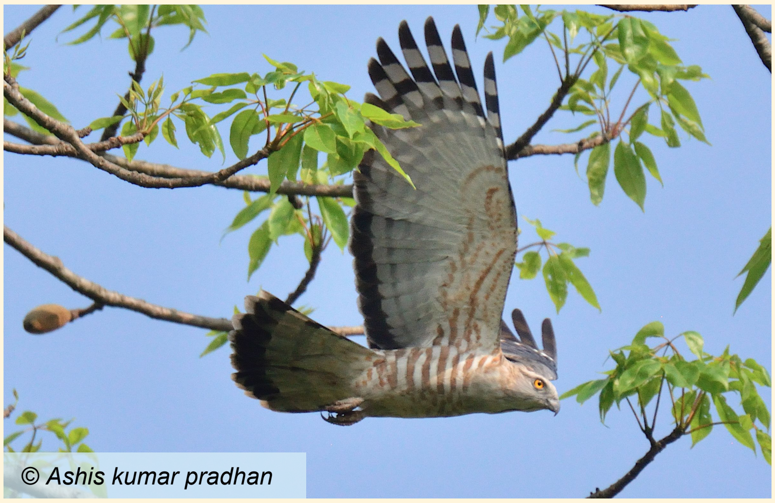
"Jerdon's Baza" - A name I had heard for the first time from a birding friend - Mr Anand, when I called him to enquire about the bird sightings expected in and around Maredumilli region. My first reaction was "Is that really a bird's name?" This was during my initial days of birding. I went to Maredumilli for the first time on 13th December 2015 for bird watching. During the trip, I got fifteen lifers, which included the Malabar Pied Hornbill! But, I couldn't find Jerdon's Baza. After that visit, I have been to Maredumilli five times and during every visit, I have frantically searched for this bird, but never got a single sight of it! I had dedicated a couple of these trips exclusively for this particular bird! Each trip was carefully planned by referring to the old sightings, its habitat, reading articles about the region and with a positive mindset of seeing this bird. After multiple visits, we came to a conclusion that this bird has evaded this region and is not to be seen anymore. Although, there are a few records of its sightings on www.ebird.org , the last photographic evidence however, goes all the way back to 2011, by Mr Sathyanarayana Srinivasan.

## About Jerdon's Baza

Jerdon's Baza (*Aviceda jerdoni*) belongs to the genus Aviceda. It is also commonly referred to as Blyth's Baza or Northern Brown Lizard Hawk and the southern race as Legge's Baza or Southern Brown Lizard Hawk. Baza was formerly used as a Latin genus name for this bird. Probably derived from modern Latin via Hindi from the Arabic/Persian baz meaning 'hawk'. Aviceda derived from the Latin *avis*, 'a bird' and *caedere,* 'to kill'. Jerdoni after Thomas Claverhill Jerdon, a Scottish field ornithologist, collector, author and a physician.

It can be identified with distinctive crow-sized brownish hawk with rufous-brown head, strongly streaked black. Male has more dark brown above, feathers of nape and mantle prominently edged rufous. Belly more strongly barred and tail more evenly barred with broader bands. Head feathers edged white. Two or three long black, white-tipped feathers from a distinctive crest. Female similar to male, but paler, lacking grey on head and upper parts showing tawnier head and chest, yellower-rufous barring below and more irregular mesial throat stripe.


© *Ashis kumar pradhan*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It can be easily confused with Crested Goshawk, which shares a similar habitat. When perched, the short legs, pale pigeon-like head, long, erect crest and wing-tips reaching more than halfway down the tail are diagnostic and distinguish it from Crested Goshawk. Another prominent field character is the pale mesial stripe (it is bold in Crested Goshawk).

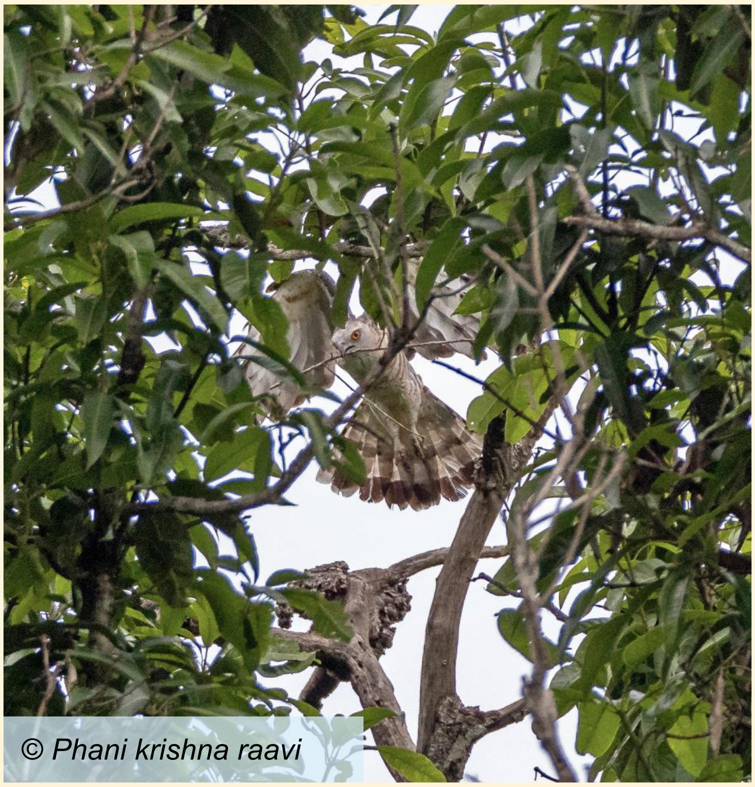
It is a resident bird for this region. It is elusive and rarely seen. If seen, then usually in pairs. During courtship, it is vocal and active. A sluggish flier, it is apparently not able to hunt birds, which do not normally figure in its diet. It hunts from ambush, usually a leafy tree, taking mainly large insects, lizards, frogs and rodents.

It usually breeds during April to June. Both male and female participate in nest building. A nest is small, slightly larger than the nest of a crow with a shallow cavity, made up of leafy twigs, well-hidden amidst foliage. Usually nests in forest, but sometimes on trees in plantations bordering forests.

### The Sighting

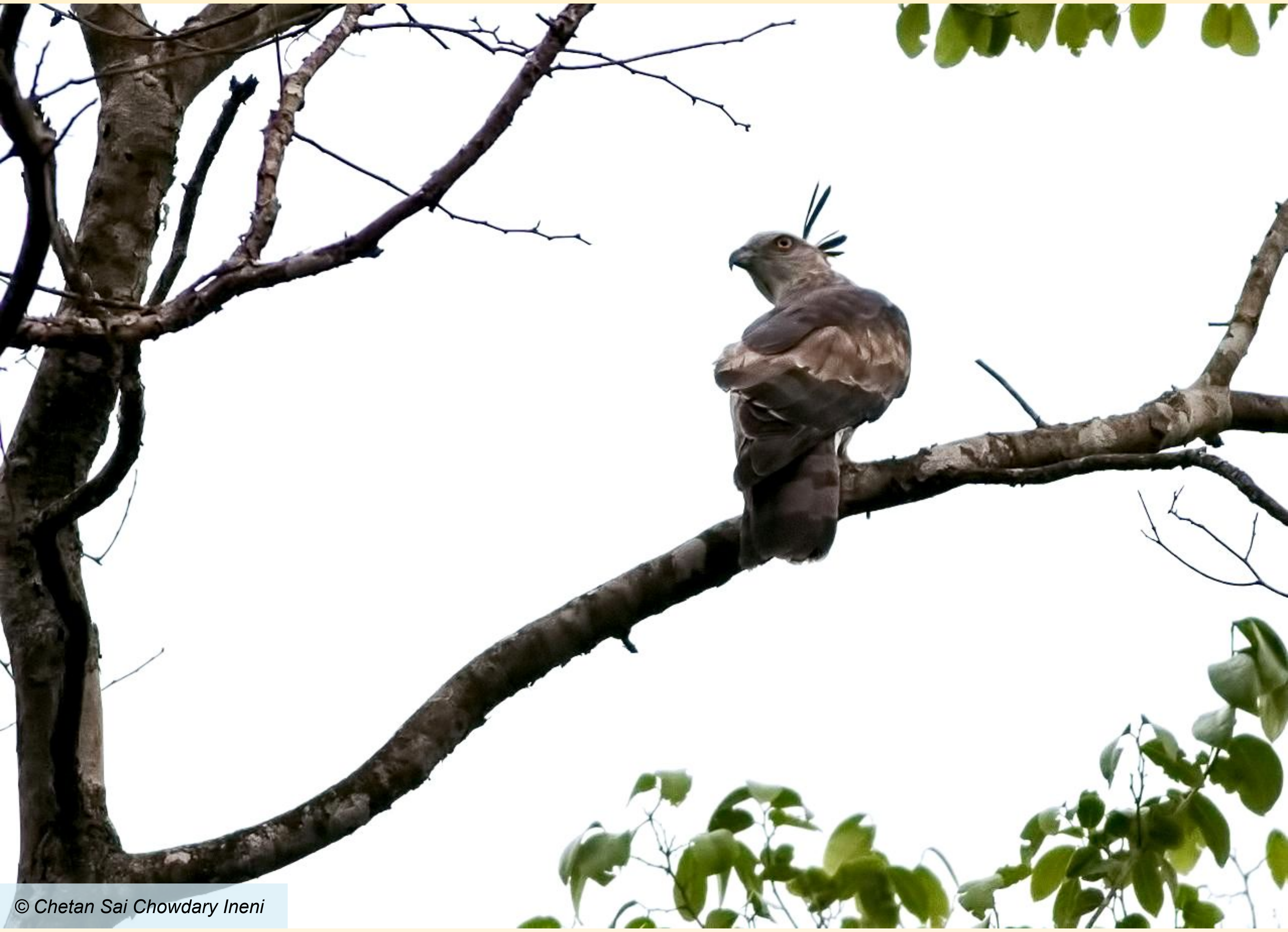
From Friday, 11th May to Sunday, 13th May 2018, Hyderabad Birding Pals (HBP) conducted their 207th bird walk to Maredumilli. In my car were Subrata, Manjula and myself. On our way, we discussed about our target birds. I said, my list is very small, since I have seen almost all the birds from that region and Jerdon's Baza was my priority. I mentioned how this bird has evaded me till now and my friend Manjula who is visiting for the first time said “Don’t worry, we will find it this time”. She was pretty confident about it and I was thinking “Hope we can at least get a glimpse of it this time!” But, I had kept my hopes low because of my past experiences.

On Saturday, the second day of our bird walk, we decided to explore Maredumilli-Gurthedu-Darakoda route. We sighted a Jerdon’s Baza pair perched on top of a tree(17°43'N 81°46'E) close to Aakumamidithota village. The tree was in the middle of a podu cultivation (jafra - Bixa orellana) field on a hillside, adjacent to a densely forested slope(the forest had moist deciduous vegetation). The surrounding areas are hills on one side and teak & rubber plantation on the other. The female is seen collecting nesting material. The nest is built on a tall mango tree. Female is seen visiting this tree frequently. The couple seemed to be undisturbed by human activities. They seem to fly from one tree to another, but never left that habitat. This couple was observed for 30 minutes.



*© Phani krishna raavi*

As assured by Manjula, she was the one to spot them first. This amazing bird was not only a lifer for me but also for most members of HBP!



© Chetan Sai Chowdary Ineni

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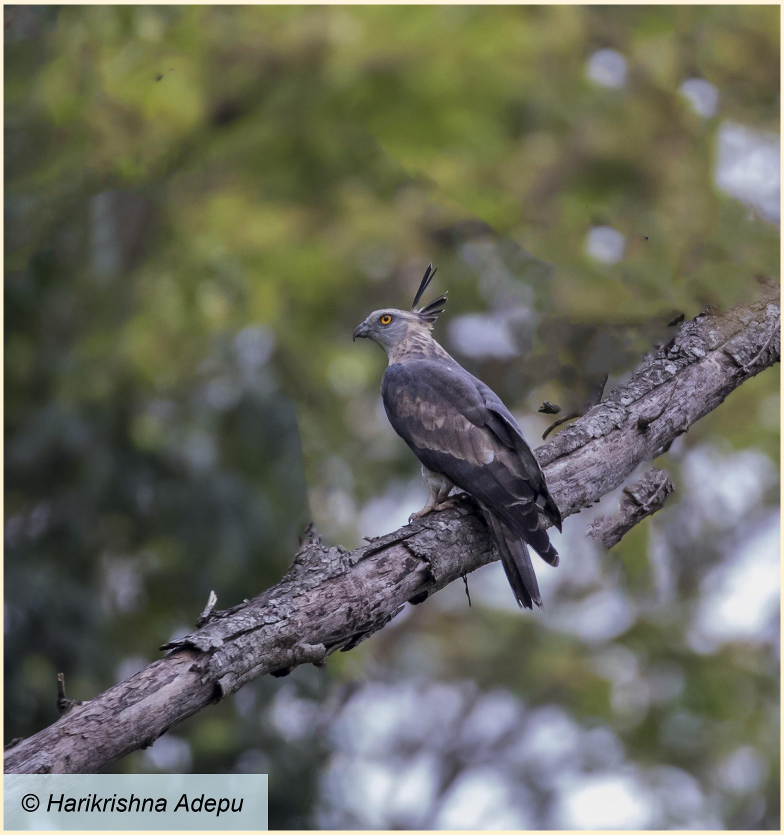


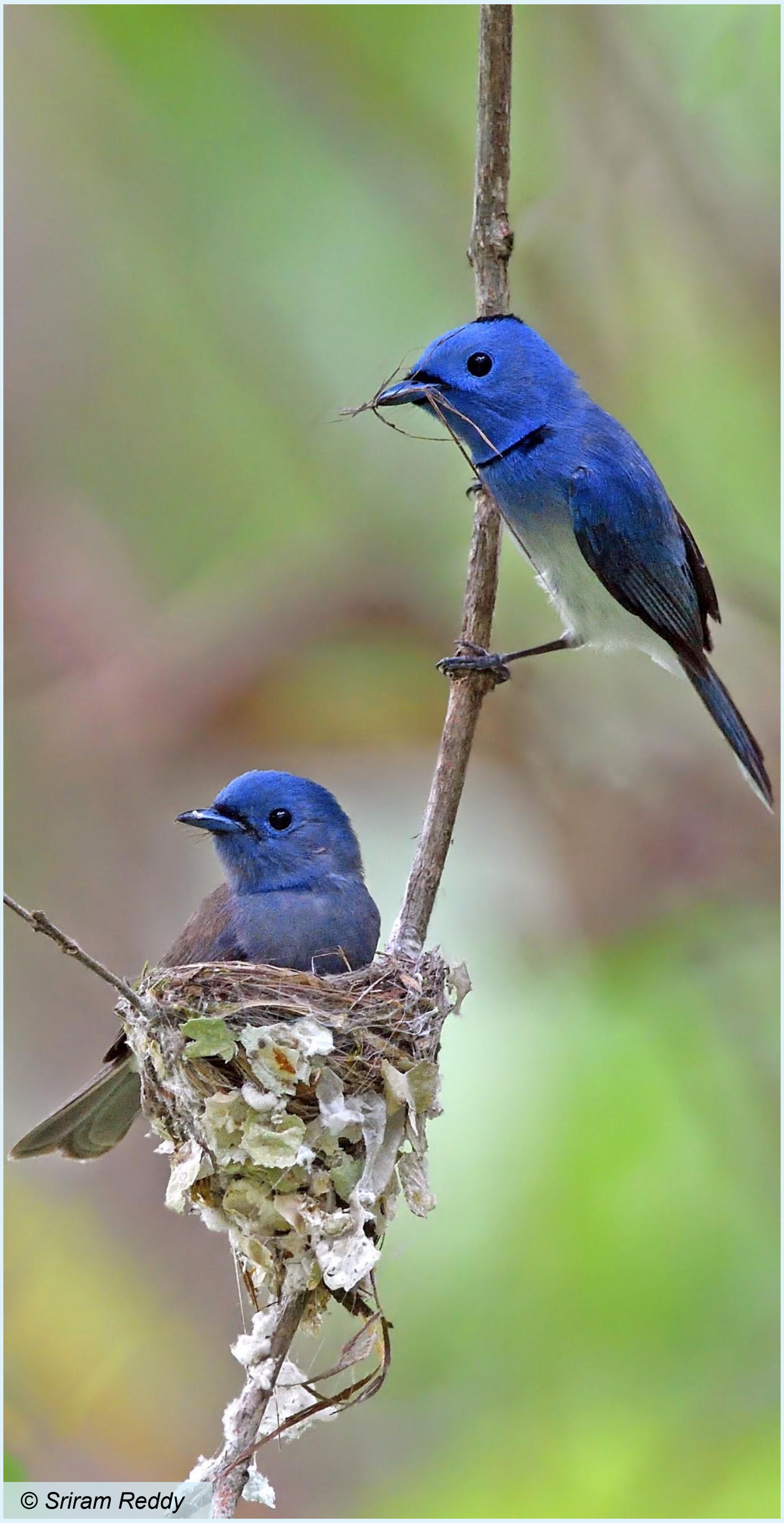
© Harikrishna Adepu

# Nesting of Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* in Maredumilli

### By Sriram Reddy

The black-naped monarch (*Hypothymis azurea*) belongs to the order Passeriformes, and family Monarchidae (monarch and paradise-flycatchers family). They are sexually dimorphic, with the male has a predominantly bright-blue plumage, which is slightly darker on the back. There is also a narrow, black frontal-band over the bill and a black nuchal tuft. A black narrow half collar is also noticeable just below the throat. The breast areas are also bright-blue just under the collar, fading to a white at the belly and stretching to the vent. The bill is blue with a black tip and the legs are greyish-blue. The female like the male, has a bright-blue head, a narrow black frontal-band over the bill and a black nuchal tuft. Unlike the male, the female does not have a distinct black narrow half collar. The breast is a rather dull light grey, fading to an off-white belly and vent. They have a call that is similar to that of the Asian paradise flycatcher.

This species is usually found in thick forests and other well-wooded habitats. These birds however, are generally found in the shade layers of their habitat. They are widespread resident ranging from the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka, South China, Taiwan and south-east Asia. It is practically absent from the dry north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent although stray individuals have been occasionally recorded.



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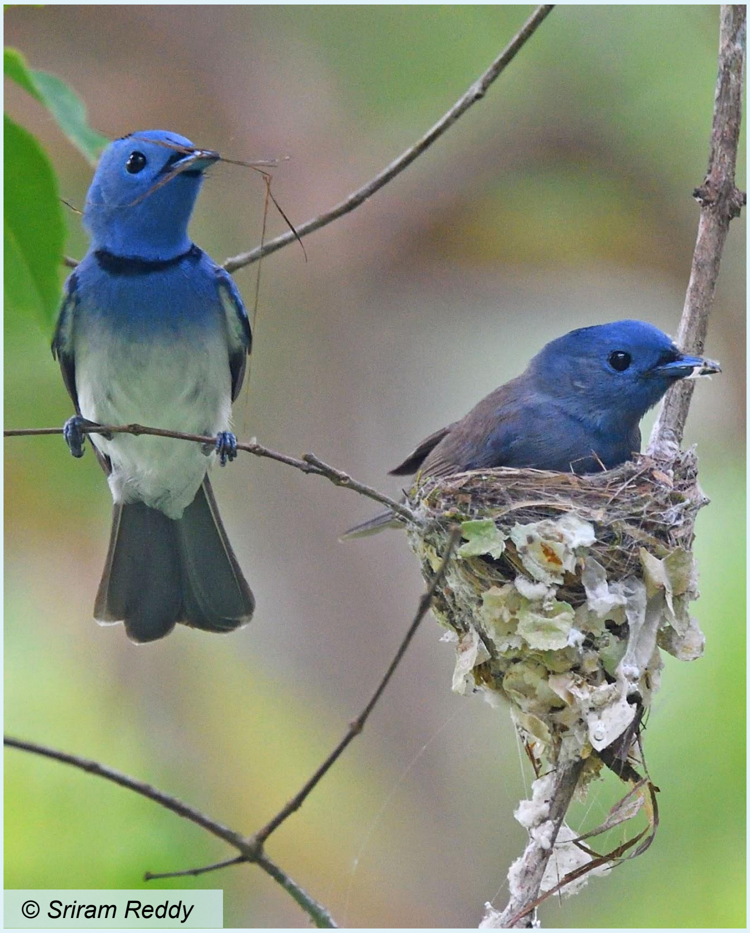
The main breeding season in India is in summer from May to July. Nesting often takes place in a multi-pronged stem fork, but has also been recorded on a liana, on a bamboo culm, and also recorded outside forest in a branch fork of a rubber tree. The nest is a deep compact cup of fiber and bark-like material, as well as fungal hyphal clumps, cobwebs, spider eggs sacks and cocoon silk which is used as an anchorage material for attaching green moss.

An active nest of Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher was discovered on Rajahmudry-Badrachalam ghat road (17° 40’N 81°36'E) which comes under Papikonda national park, Andhra Pradesh. This place is 20kms from Maredumilli (17° 36’N 81°43'E). The Papikonda national park area includes within its limits, villages and plantations of coffee and teak as well as dense forest along the ghat road to Chinturu. The altitude of the area is about 400m above MSL around Maredumilli; this drops to around 100m along the road to Bhadrachalam near Chinturu in neighboring Khammam district to the west, and increases to about 800m near Matham Bhimavaram in neighboring Visakhapatnam district to the east. The altitude again drops to around 200m south at Rampachodavaram. Vegetation here is a mix of both native and exotic species and mostly deciduous. Bamboo trees are abundant. Coffee and Rubber are also planted extensively around Maredumilli. These hills are crisscrossed with perennial streams, the humid shaded valleys of which have evergreen elements – a variety of ferns, aroids, Tree Ferns and Wild Banana.

Nest was discovered on 13th May 2018 during the 207th Bird walk conducted by Hyderabad Birding Pals at Maredumilli. This was spotted by Manjula Desai, Sriram Reddy & Subrata Kool. The cone-shaped nest was placed on a fork between two branches, a little over 3 meters above ground in the canopy of an Entada sp., a woody climber. It was made of grass and thin twigs, lined with cobwebs, spider egg cases, lichen and leaves. The spider’s web is sticky and tough. Many small birds collect strands of spider silk to build their nests. Spider silk not only acts as a glue, holding the nest together, but it’s flexible enough to accommodate the growing nestlings. It is resilient enough to withstand the bustle of hungry chicks.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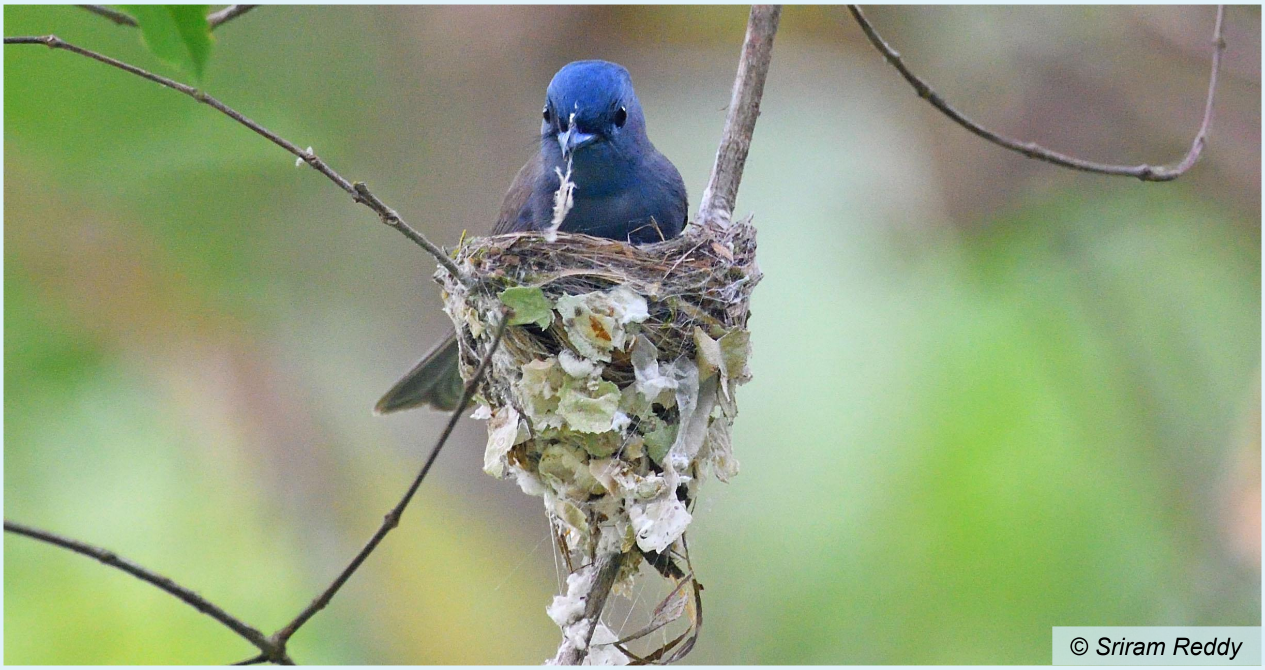
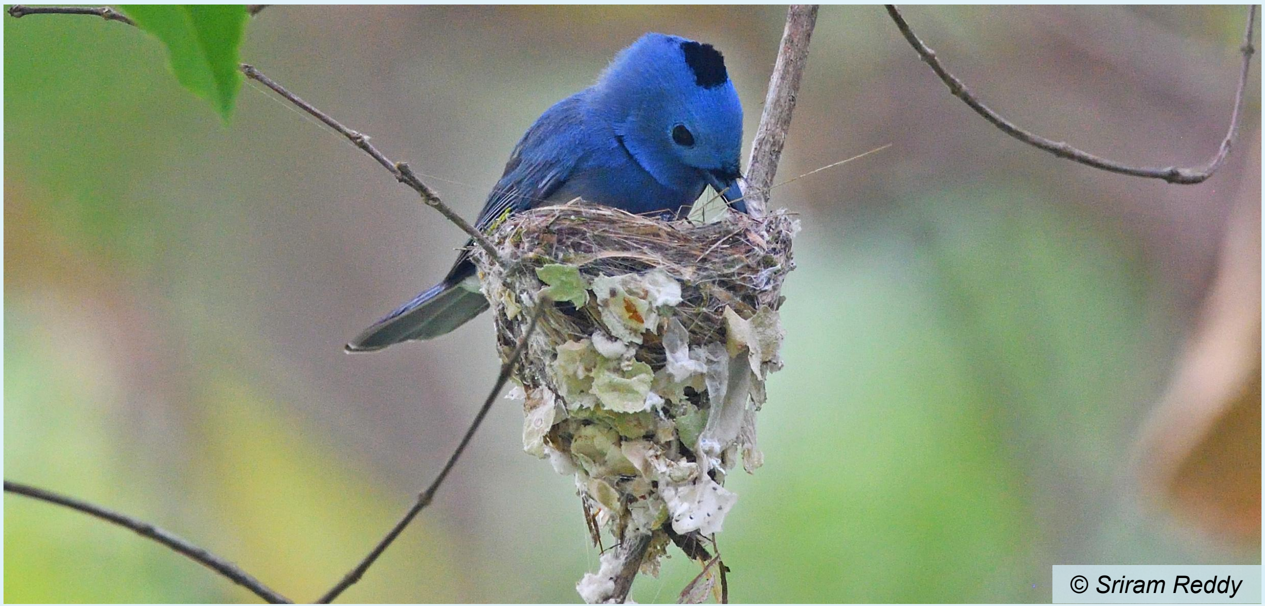
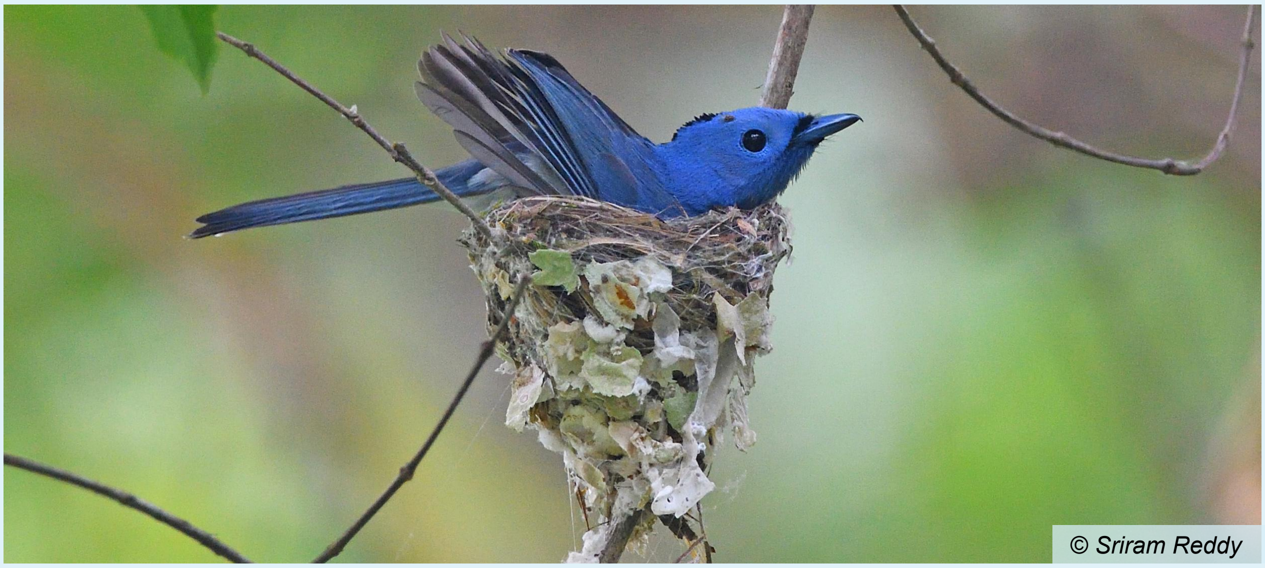
We observed that the nest-building was at its final stage with both male and female parents participating actively. Male bird can be seen carrying the nesting material and female carrying cobwebs or silk cotton like material.



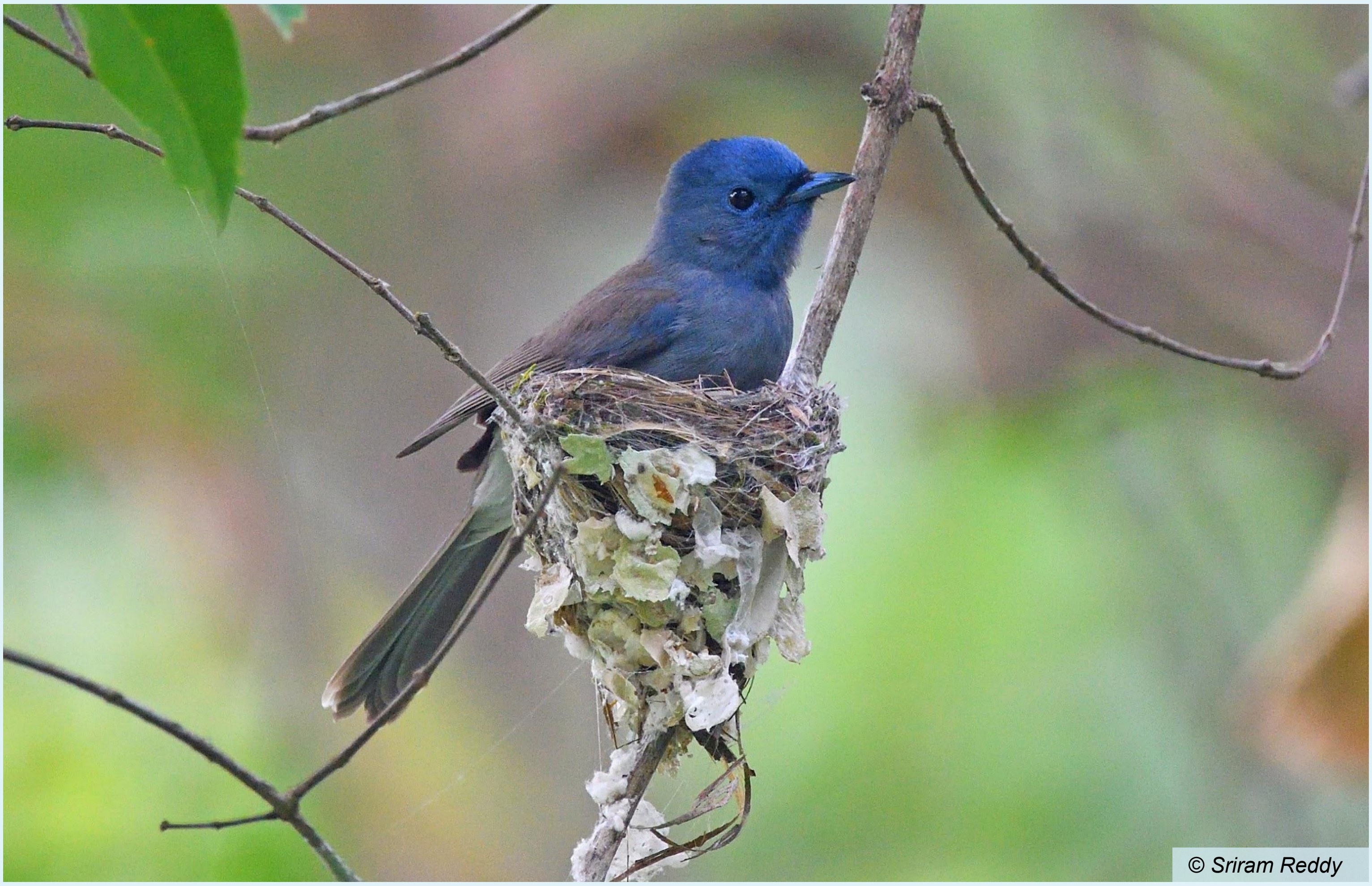
Female bird is mostly seen decorating the nest with this material



The male is seen inserting fibrous plant material into the nest



After inserting the nesting material, male is adjusting the nest by pushing his body against the floor of the nest, applying pressure and moving around inside



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After some time, the female is seen inspecting the changes made to the nest

**An interesting example of resilience**
**By Raghavarao Suryadevara**

# 200th Bird Walk Celebration Meet

### By Pratiksha Kothule

HBP
Friends of Flora & Fauna
200th

One fine day, my mentor and head of our NGO Mr. Bishwarup Raha, informed me that we have been invited to the 200th Bird Walk Celebration meet of Hyderabad Birding Pals as speakers. We were happy to know that we are amongst one of the well-known environmentalists to be invited and also keen as we were able to represent our NGO (Nature Conservation society of Nashik) and present our work at the event.

The event was happening on 31st March at Marigold Hotel, Hyderabad. The event was sponsored by Telangana Tourism and organised by “Hyderabad Birding pals” and “Friends of Flora and Fauna”. I and Raha sir landed in Hyderabad on the same day of the event, just a few hours before it started. Naveen Sama, one of the members of ‘Hyderabad Birding Pal’ had come to receive us at the airport. We interacted with him in the cab and got to know about HBP in detail. He informed us how HBP was formed and how it has grown to 4000+ Facebook members now and all from different walks of life.

It was very impressive to learn about HBP’s love for birds and how they consistently meet every Sunday for birdwatching. The members record birds and also upload the checklist on www.ebird.org – a global platform for bird watching data which is used for scientific research. It was very impressive to know that members are actively involved in solving conservation issues faced around Hyderabad. On 31st March, they were gathering to celebrate their 200th bird walk and had made it a grand event. We were very excited to be a part of it and also to listen and interact with other speakers and HBP members.

We reached the event location and were amazed with the overall event set up. The event started on time with a beautiful cultural performance by the children of Beeramguda High School depicting the beauty and importance of environment. Followed by keynote speech by Mr Harikrishna Adepu, President, HBP.

**Harikrishna Adepu, President, HBP**

**P.K. Jha, IFS, PCCF (HoFF), Telangana Forest Department**

First speaker of the event was Mr. P.K. Jha, IFS, PCCF (HoFF), Telangana Forest Department who spoke about the efforts of the forest department in wildlife conservation around Telangana.

Second speaker Mr. B Venkatesham, IAS, Secretary to Govt. of Telangana, Youth Advancement, Tourism & Culture Department couldn't come due to unavoidable circumstances

I was eagerly waiting for Mr Aasheesh Pittie's speech, who is the Editor of Indian birds. He is an old friend of Raha sir and I had heard some interesting stories of their early career when they were together on a Bird Ringing Camp. Raha sir had told me that Aasheesh sir has one of the finest bird library in the world with a collection of books from the British era. His knowledge of birds is immense and listening to him was a dream come true. His topic of presentation was "Deeper Birding, what can be achieved if classical birding is taken seriously". He emphasised his talk on birding without camera. He taught us to not only observe birds but study their behaviour, to note birds calls, their habitat, to observe seasonal variations. He explained the importance of field note making which can be helpful to collect useful bird information.

**Aasheesh Pittie**
**Editor, Indian Birds**

His talk opened a different perspective of birding altogether and how we can contribute to the scientific findings if we observe birds with binoculars and not just run behind getting the “Perfect Bird Shots”.

Fourth speaker, **Mrs. Tejdeep Kaur Menon, IPS, Director General of Police, TSSPF** shared the journey of Ameenpur lake, its biodiversity, issues faced and actions taken to save the ecosystem. The commendable work of cleaning up Ameenpur Lake under the guidance of Mrs Tejdeep Kaur Menon and her group of dedicated colleagues is really a role model for conservation. Fifth speaker, **Mr. Kanwar B Singh the Founder of “Indian Birds”** Facebook group gave insights about overall bird watching in India. Sixth Speaker, Mr. Shivshankar Manjunatha the Author of Birds of Southern Coastal Karnataka introduced us to the world of Pelagic birds. He shared his experience of the pelagic surveys conducted along the east coast. It was amazing to know about the minute details of pelagic winged beauties, their behaviour and also the conservation issues faced by them.

Later came our turn to speak. Mr Bishwarup Raha, a Wildlife Conservationist and President, Nature Conservation Society of Nashik (NCSN) and I spoke about “The story of Borgad Conservation Reserve and other conservation activities of NCSN”. Our topic highlighted the importance of long term conservation and awareness to bring back the lost biodiversity. The session ended with a bang, with the most awaited and entertaining presentation of the evening, by Mr Rohan Chakravarty, cartoonist & illustrator and creator of “Green Humour”. He demonstrated a story - “The Big Dipper: Misadventures of a failed birder”. His work is truly creditable as he combines the serious conservation issues with humour. Listening to him was a treat.

HBP
Hyderabad Birding Pals
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200th
BIRD WALK CELEBRATIONS
Sponsored by
Telangana Tourism

**Shivshankar M**
**Author, Birds of Southern Coastal Karnataka**

**Rohan Chakravarty**
**Cartoonist & Illustrator. Creator- Green Humour**

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**Bishwarup Raha**
**Wildlife Conservationist,**
**President, NCSN**

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Telangan
Tourism

I consider myself fortunate that I had the privilege of attending 200th bird walk celebrations of Hyderabad Birding Pals. HBP is creating a huge impact towards conservation of important bird habitats in the region. The birding groups everywhere can learn much from HBP, especially about bringing multiple stakeholders together for conserving birds and their habitats. Next day, we joined the team for the 200th bird walk to Ananthagiri hills. Ananthagiri is a beautiful forest patch which is about 60 km from Hyderabad. We saw many birds like Orange-headed Thrush, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Babbler, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Indian Grey Hornbill, Rufous Treepie, Ashy Drongo and many more. The highlights for me were Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and Black-naped Hare!

Thank you HBP for inviting us to your special event; it was a great opportunity and a memorable time for us.

**Amarnath Menon**
**President, FoFF**

200th
BIRD WALK CELEBRATIONS

# 200th Bird Walk Celebration Meet

SAVE WATER FOR FUTURE
NO EARTH NO LIFE
EARTH IS A LOVELY PLANET
LIFE HAS A PLACE ONLY ON IT!

HBP
Friends of Flora & Fauna
200th
BIRD WALK CELEBRATIONS
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# 200th Bird Walk Celebration Meet

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# 200th Bird Walk Celebration Meet

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**Event photographs by Jagdish Chandra**

# What's in My Camera Bag?

## Jitender Govindani

Hi! this is Jitender Govindani. I am a Professor by profession, but a wildlife photographer and a nature enthusiast by heart and have been enjoying photography for the last three years. I see my camera as a kaleidoscope with the help of which I capture colourful wildlife moments which only last for a few seconds, I love to make memories out of those moments by capturing and ceasing them for eternity.

Wildlife has always been a stress buster; travelling across Indian jungles with my camera thrills me, with every new safari comes a new experience and hope of clicking my best shots. I have been to various sanctuaries like Jim Corbett National park, Kanha National park, Ranthambore National Park, Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Dudhwa National Park, Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve and many more. In Spite of visiting so many jungles, nothing can beat the picturesque, mystic beauty of Jim Corbett National Park, followed by the diversity of flora and fauna in Kanha Tiger Reserve.

I love to click the ravens on the canopy, the snakes that crawl, the monkeys that climb, the deers that can sense a danger, the owls that are good hunters; Among all the species I photograph the only animal that lures me to my camera is the Tiger; the largest cat species. Tiger is the animal that teaches me to be furious yet calm, strong yet tender, elegant yet simple.

Words cannot articulate my love for wildlife but my camera can.

## My journey into wildlife photography

My journey into wildlife photography started by chance in March 2011, while I was at Dehradun and I was supposed to give a presentation the very next day. A sudden strike & I was left stranded for 3 days. Those were the days where flight tickets would be booked almost 2 months in advance & last minute tickets were unimaginable. It was then that my local friend suggested why don't we go to Corbett Tiger Reserve for the next 3 days.

It was during this trip that I saw the tiger for the first time. However, neither I had a point & shoot camera nor a mobile phone with a good camera. I still miss not having a record of my first tiger sighting. It's then that I decided to buy a good DSLR camera and so started my frequent visits to Tiger reserves & then happened the birth of a wildlife photographer.

Black was always my favorite color. Hence my camera choice also had be the black color 'Nikon' over a white-colored 'Canon'.

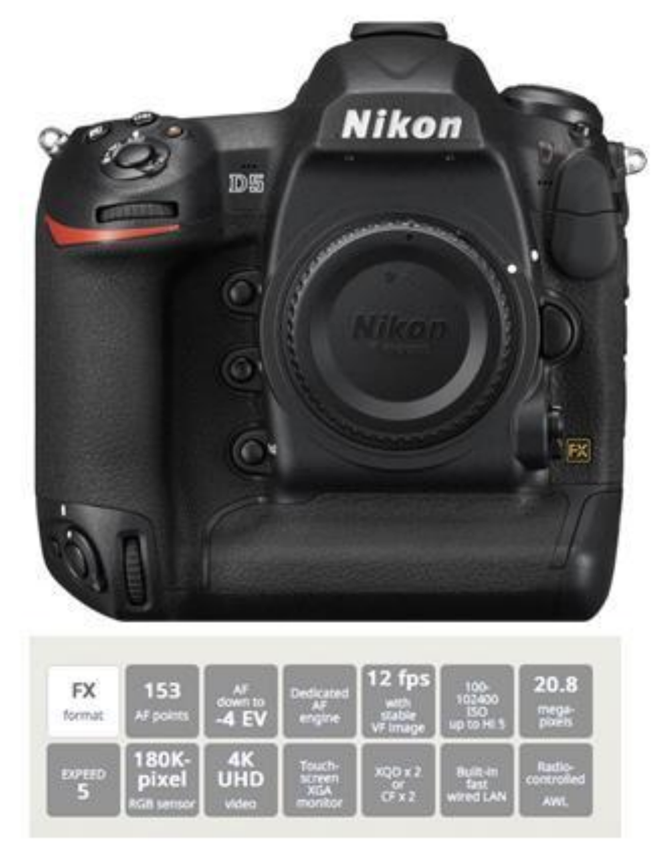
My first camera was a Nikon D90 with a Nikkor 70-300mm basic lens. I had read somewhere that wildlife photography is about spoiling your first 10,000 pictures and then started my quest into spoiling my first 10K pictures. Agricultural University at Rajender Nagar in Hyderabad became my favorite hunting ground and this is where I would click various birds like Green bee-eater, Parakeets, Common mynas, raptors etc.

After a year or so, I realized a need to have better range to click wildlife, especially birds. Soon, I upgraded to a Sigma 50-500mm lens. Six months later, I upgraded to my first full frame camera Nikon D610. The experience of using a full frame camera with a superior 7.5 fps was beyond imagination and it was during this time, I realized my photography was improving a bit. Photography bug had bitten me hard & never realized when the hobby turned into passion & finally I faced the dilemma faced by every photographer, "To upgrade to prime or not?"

Finally, the urge to use Prime lens got the best of me and I upgraded to Nikkor 500mm f/4 and then the camera to D4s and now to D5 & Nikon D850. I suggest all the budding photographers to use the existing gear to its full potential before considering an upgrade. One important question to consider, "Is there a big gap in the expected performance level of the new gear compared to the existing one?"

"Do not upgrade for cosmetic changes please".

## Nikon D5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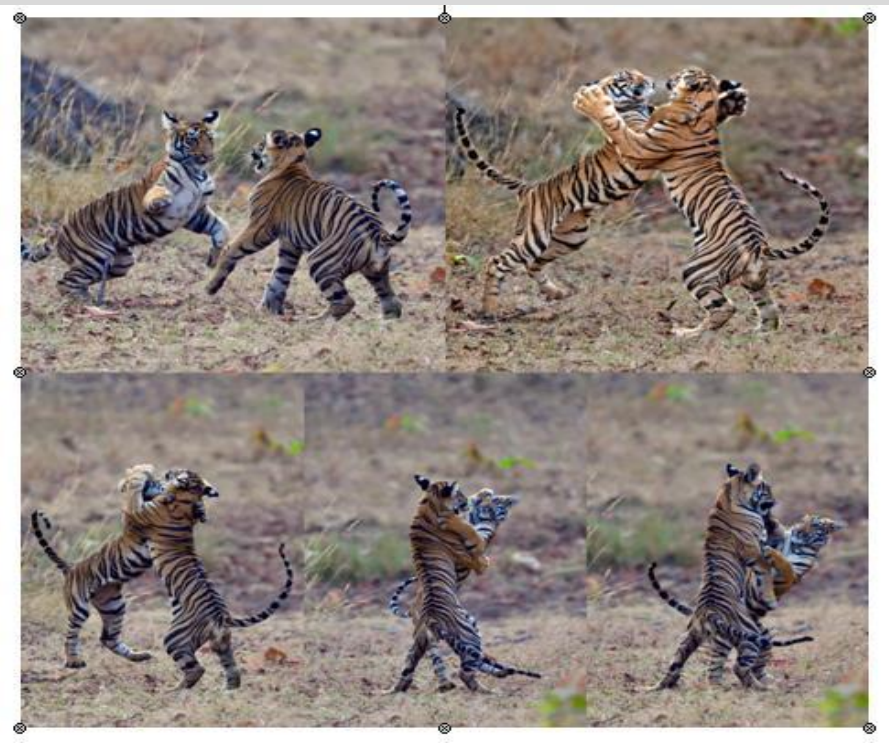
XQD x 2
or
CF x 2
Built-in
fast
wired LAN
Radio-
controlled
AWL

Nikon D5 - Undoubtedly, is the best camera gear that money can buy. The top of the line FX body from the Nikon family. It's performance, especially faster auto-focusing, 12 FPS are the best in its class & has been a star product for the Nikon family. It's more than two years that I have bought this camera and I can't think of using any other camera. The speed, performance & the image quality is far superior to any other camera of Nikon that I have used in the past.

One should seriously consider of an upgrade or buy a D5 if they are looking for the following features : A faster autofocus, superior low light & high ISO performance, better dynamic range and for shooting 4K videos.

One very important feature for me to upgrade was, 12 FPS, with a buffer of 200 clicks or more, an important feature for any wildlifer, when every frame is important & you do not want to miss any action. A sample burst shot is shown below:



## Nikon D850

I am using the Nikon D850 as my second body along with Nikkor 70-200mm f/2.8, for a little over 7 months now. Higher resolution. faster speed. greater versatility are the USP for this camera. The D850 puts staggering image quality and impressive performance within reach of photographers everywhere.

At the heart of the D850 is a back-side illuminated (BSI) FX-format full-frame CMOS image sensor with 45.7 megapixels and no optical low-pass filter.

Nikon D850 is a must buy camera for someone who can’t afford a D5 or looking for key features of a D5 at half the price. The Nikon D850 combines the power of a high-speed camera with a high-resolution sensor and in many ways represents something many Nikon shooters have been asking for. I strongly recommend this camera over the crop sensor D500, especially for bird photographers purely because of higher megapixels and thereby retaining a decent quality even after cropping.

**Lara and cubs**
**By Jitender Govindani**

# Lenses

## Nikkor AF-S 500mm f/4G ED VRII

I gifted this lens to myself on my birthday in January 2015. My photography has changed for good, ever since I bought this lens. This lens is a kilogram heavier than the new 500mm FL lens. Since Tigers are my favorite subject and using a tripod is not a feasible option. Either one has to use a bean bag or do handheld on most occasions.

A little practice at gym & stronger forearms invariably would help one to do handheld photography especially when you are shooting big cats in India or doing safaris in Masai Mara, Serengeti, Tanzania & other wildlife destination in the African continent. Please think of buying this lens only when you are in a position to do handheld as well.

Since I mostly do Tigers, I would have loved to buy a 400mm f/2.8. However, a higher price tag pushed me buy a much more economical 500mm f/4. For birders, I would strongly recommend a 600mm f/4 over the 500 mm f/4. For those who do both birds & other mammals, a 500 mm is a better option in every sense.

## Nikon AF-S NIKKOR 70-200mm - f/2.8G ED VR II

A must – have lens in your kit bag - even the pros love it. I am deeply, madly in love with this lens; bought it 3 years ago and haven’t been to a wildlife trip without this lens. An essential lens especially if you click mammals & big cats in particular. The beauty of this lens is its superior performance in low light - early mornings and late evenings are the times when you feel the need for such a lens. It is portable and a perfect lens for handheld photography, especially when you are shooting in close quarters.

Sports and wildlife photographers will welcome the fast maximum aperture ( f/2.8), which is constant throughout the zoom range. Landscape photographers may also find that extra stops advantage useful, since much of the best light occurs around dawn and dusk when a stop can make a difference between having to adjust sensitivity upwards or tolerating a longer exposure.

## Nikkor 14 -24mm f/2.8 G Lens

This, by far, is the best wide angle lens I have ever used. A great lens for clicking habitat shots & landscapes in wildlife.

Pretty much every landscape I take now and in the future, I will use this lens. It’s much better than the Sigma 10-20mm that used to fill my nights and days.
A sample image clicked with this lens:

Nikon
AF-S NIKKOR 14-24mm 1:2.8G ED
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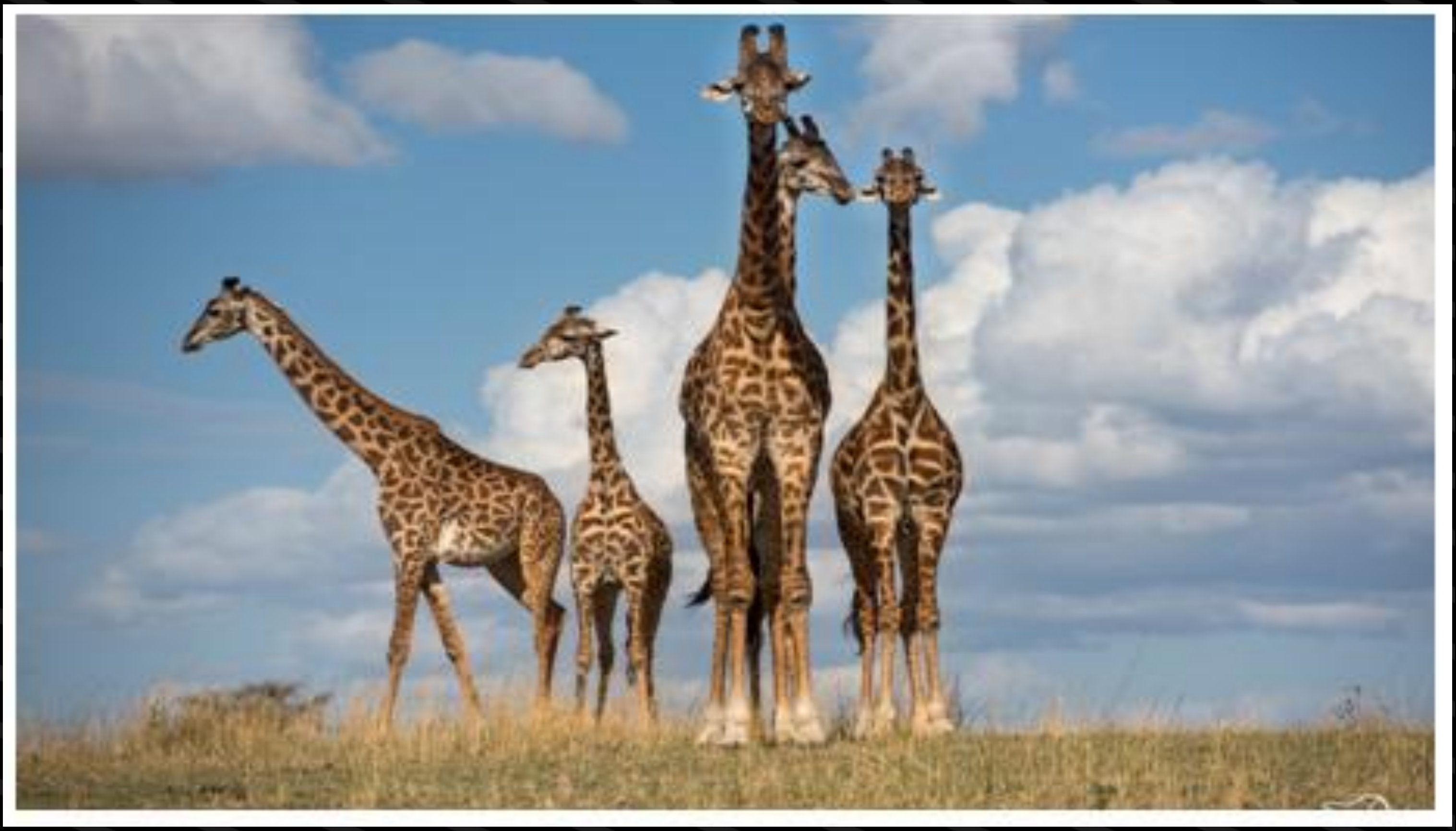
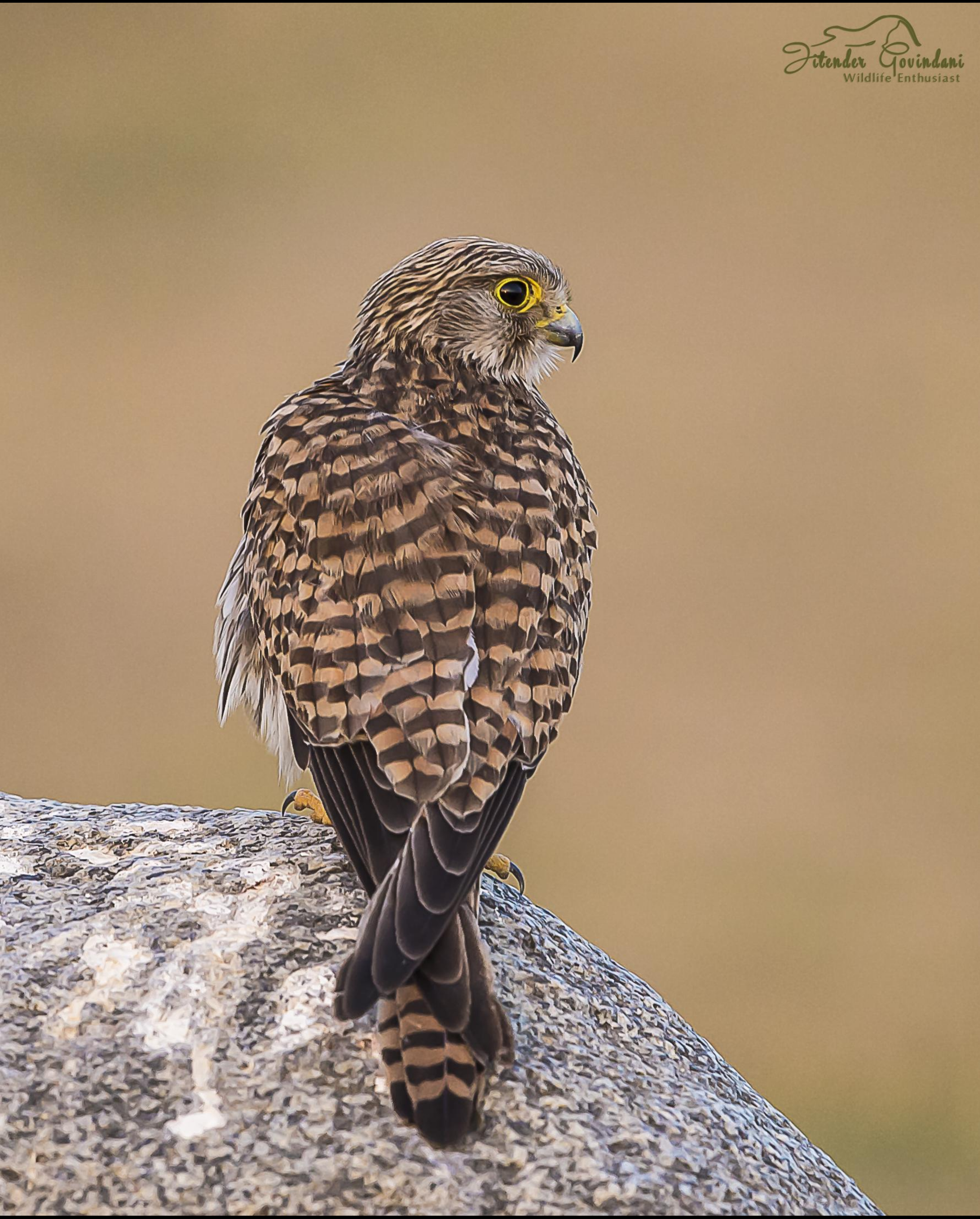


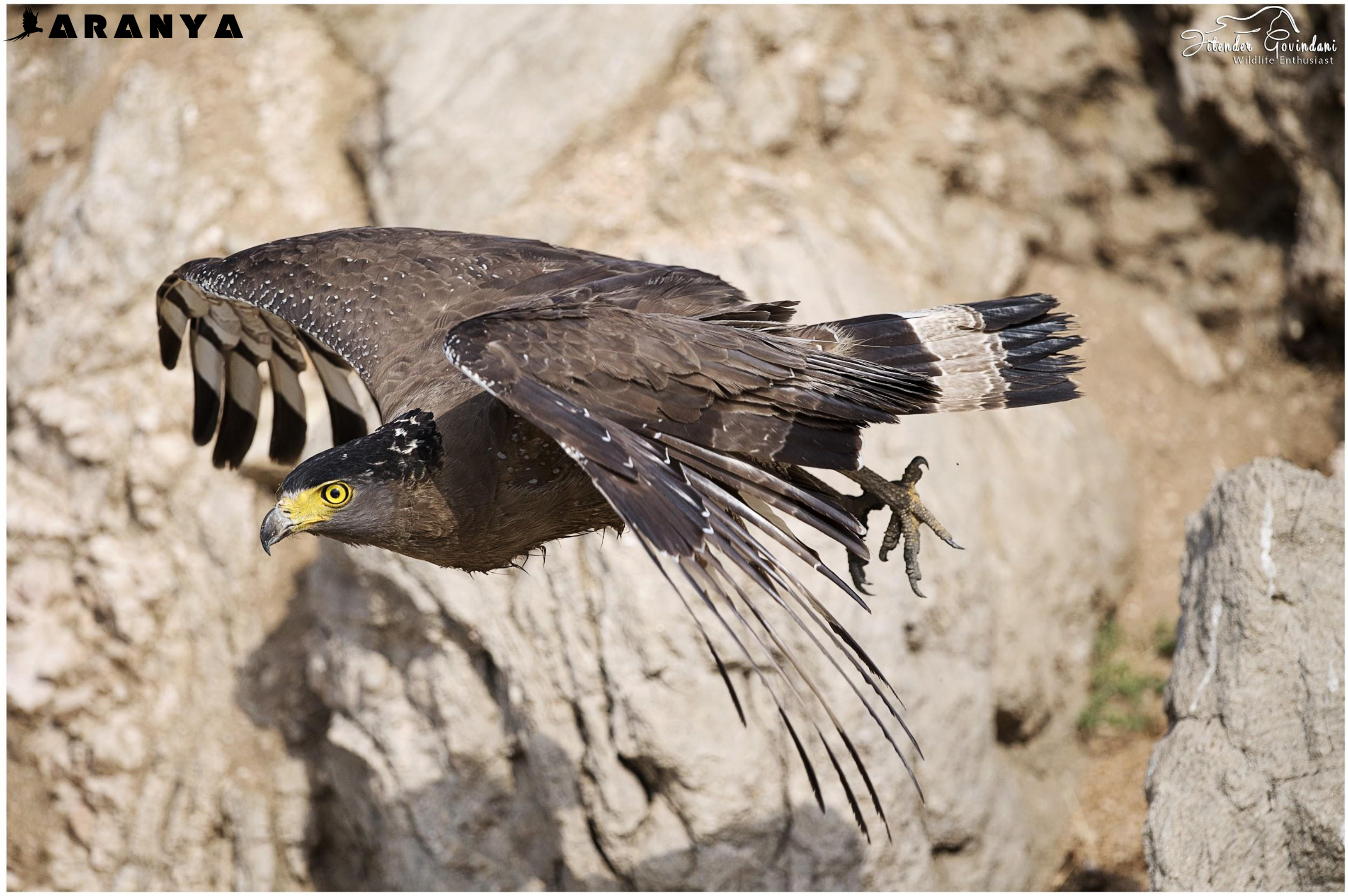

Jitender Govindani
Wildlife Enthusiast

**Eurasian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)**
**By Jitender Govindani**

Chota Munna
By Jitender Govindani

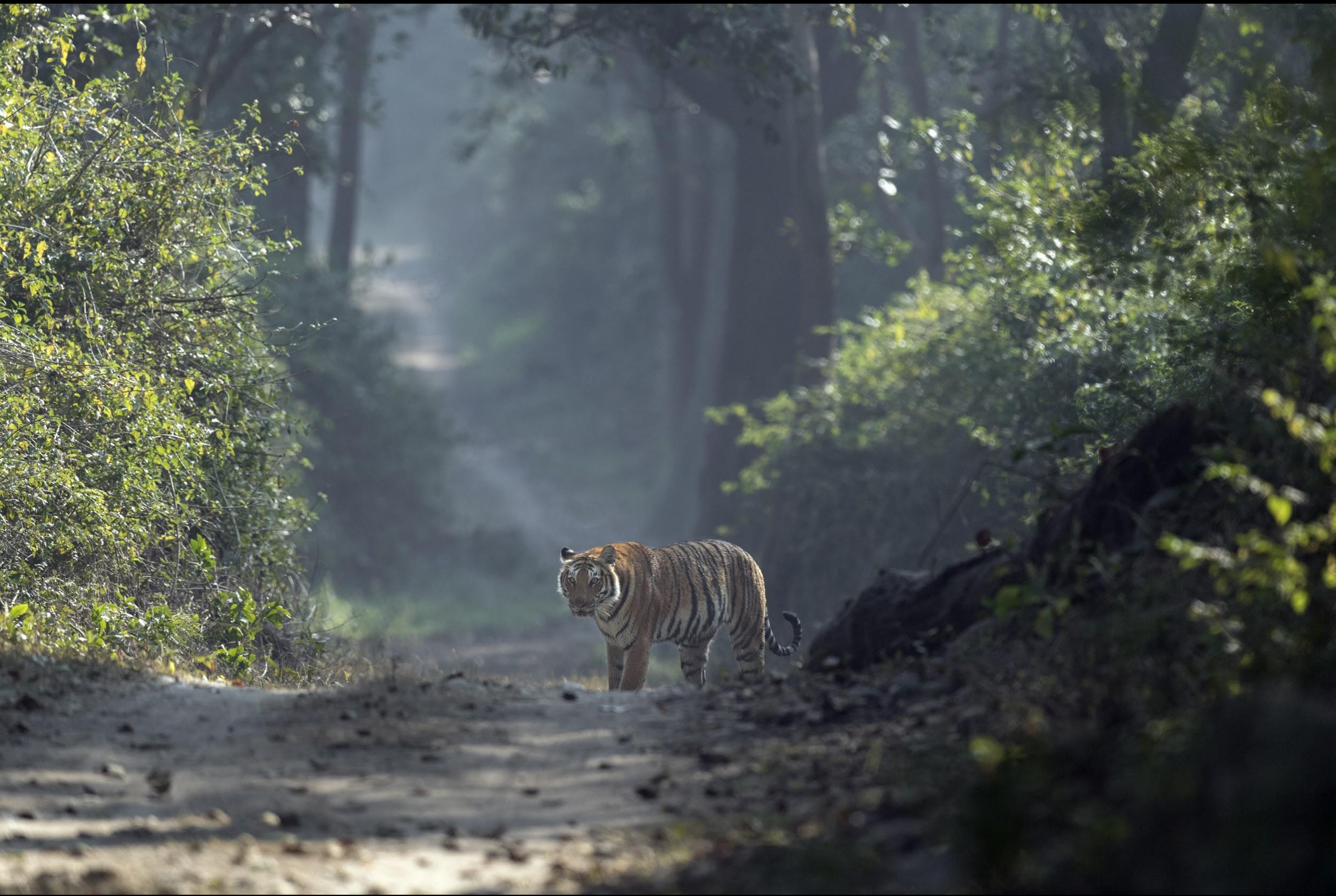
Jitender Govindani
Wildlife Enthusiast

Bold tiger Cub
By Jitender Govindani

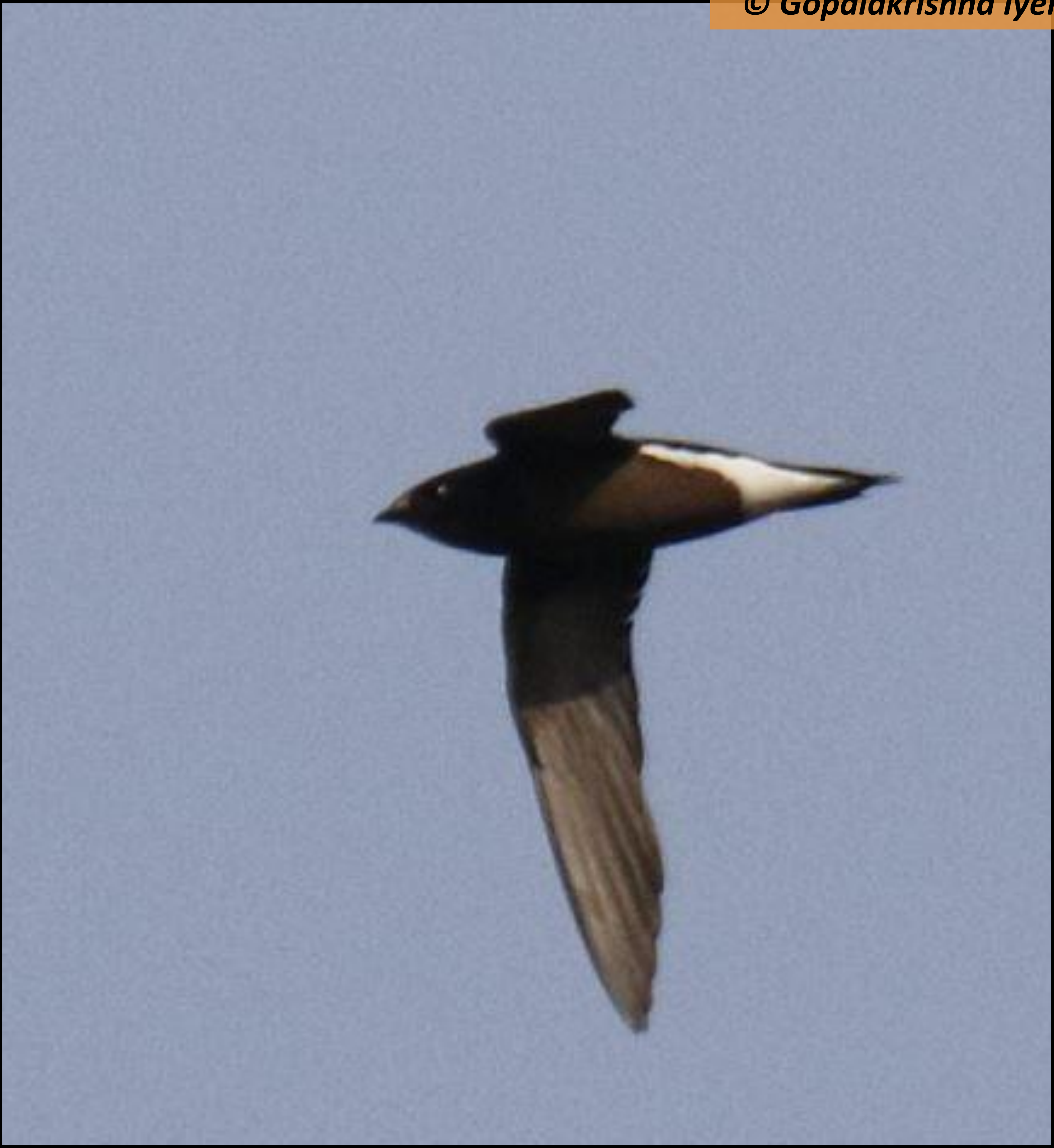

Jitender Govindani
Wildlife Enthusiast

Crested Serpent-Eagle (Spilornis cheela)
By Jitender Govindani

Paarwali on Sambar Road
By Jitender Govindani



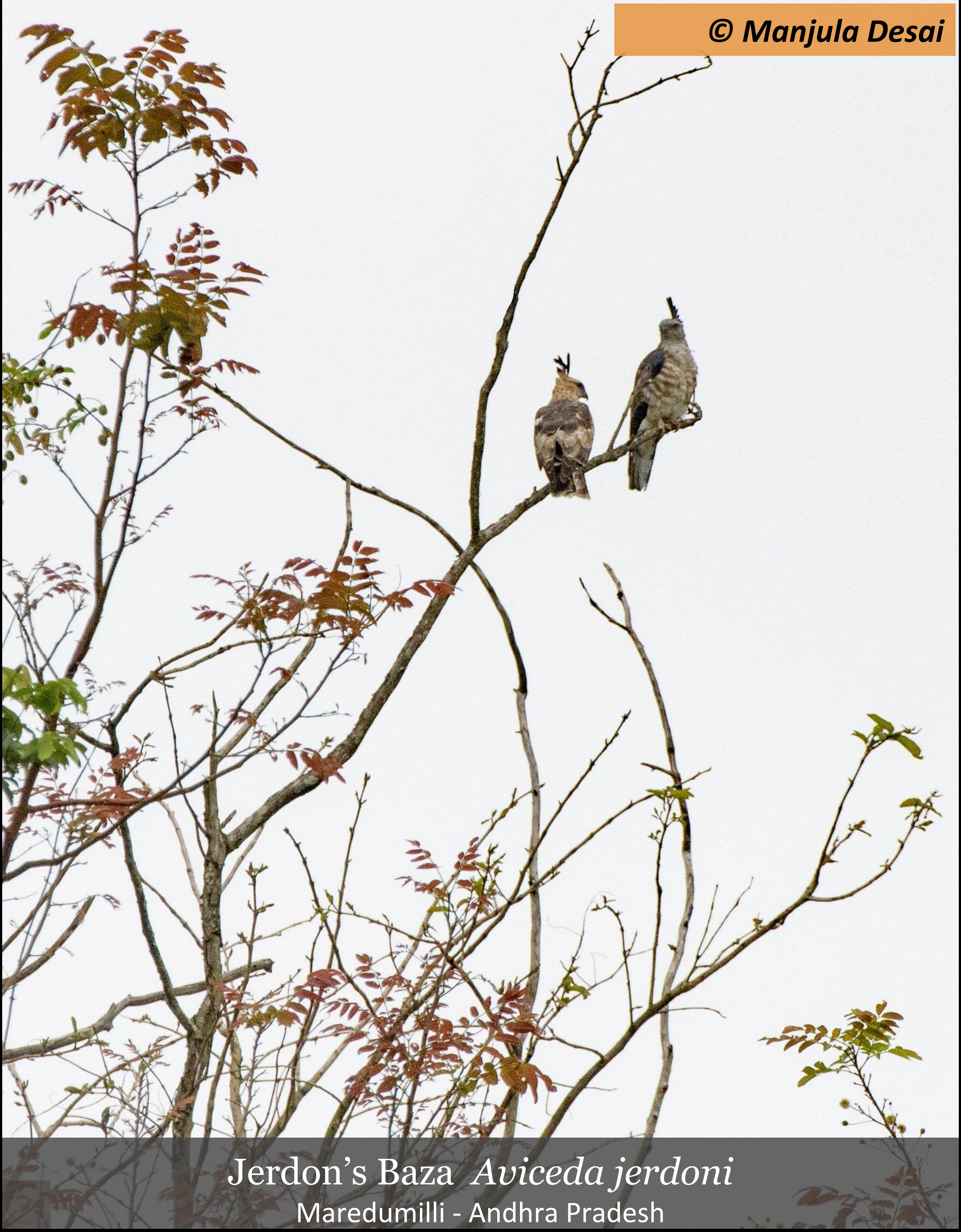
## Notable Sightings



© Gopalakrishna Iyer

Brown-backed needletail *Hirundapus giganteus*
Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

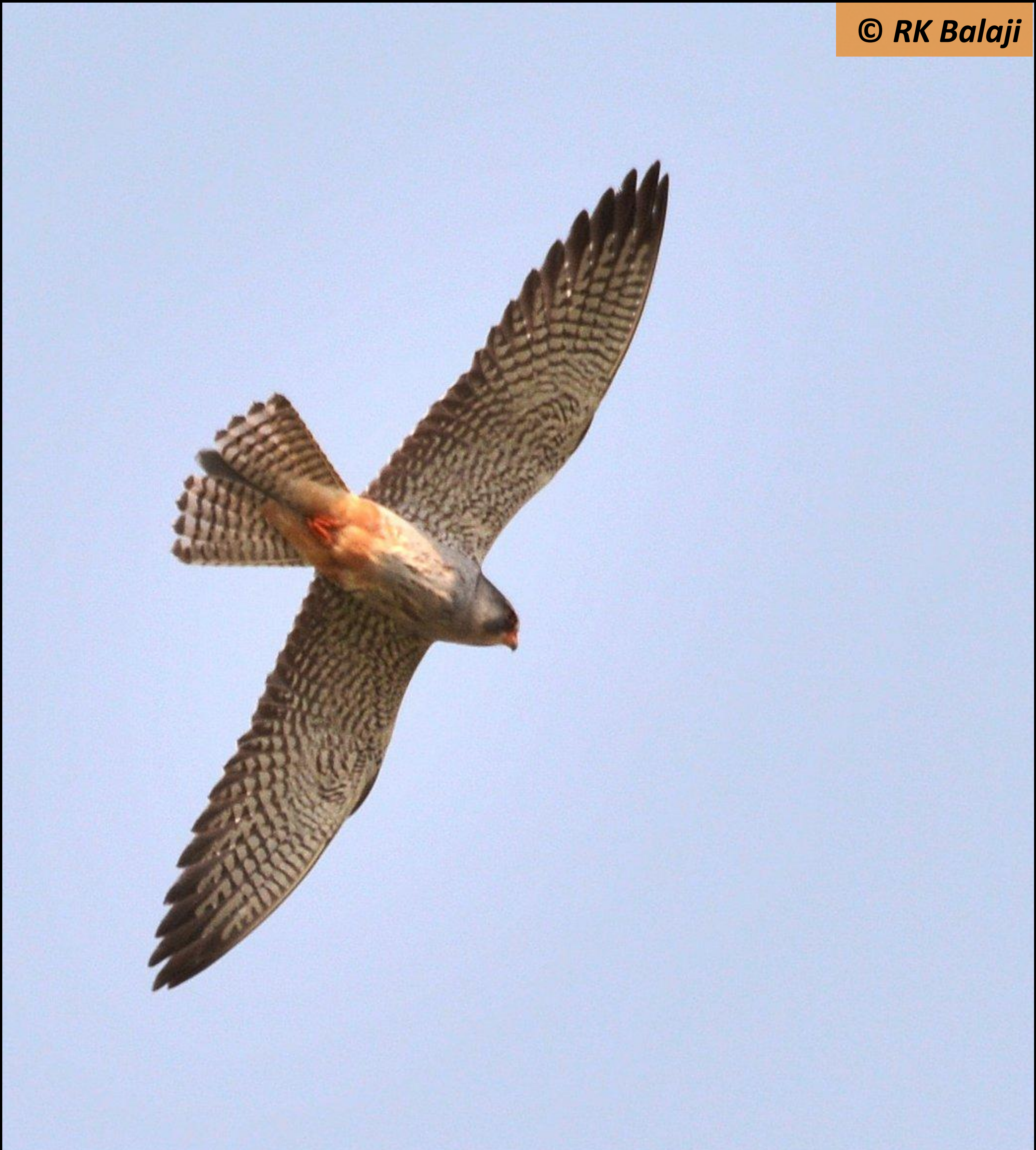
## Notable Sightings



© Manjula Desai

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni*
Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

# Notable Sightings

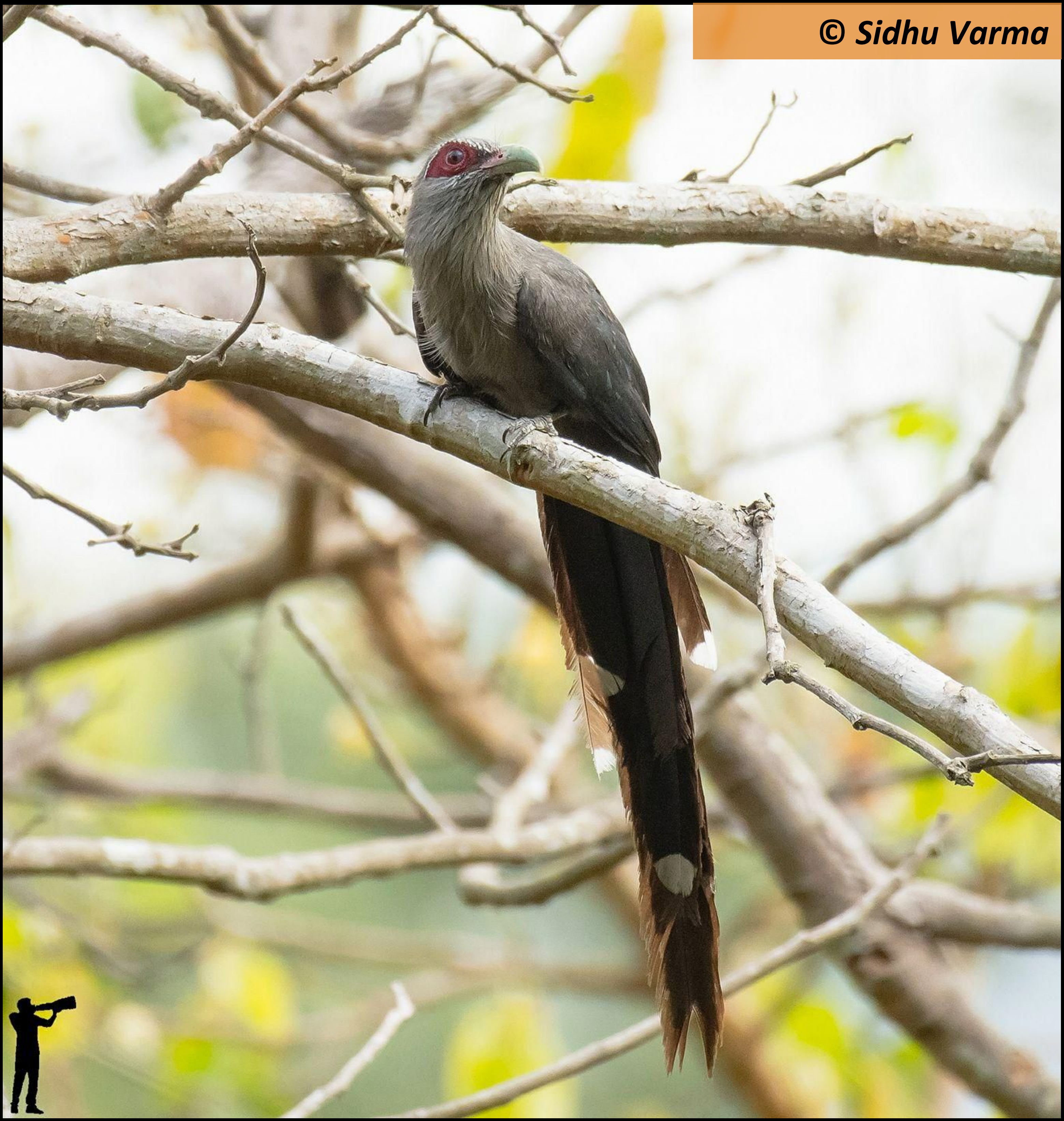


© RK Balaji

Amur falcon *Falco amurensis*

Osman sagar, Telangana

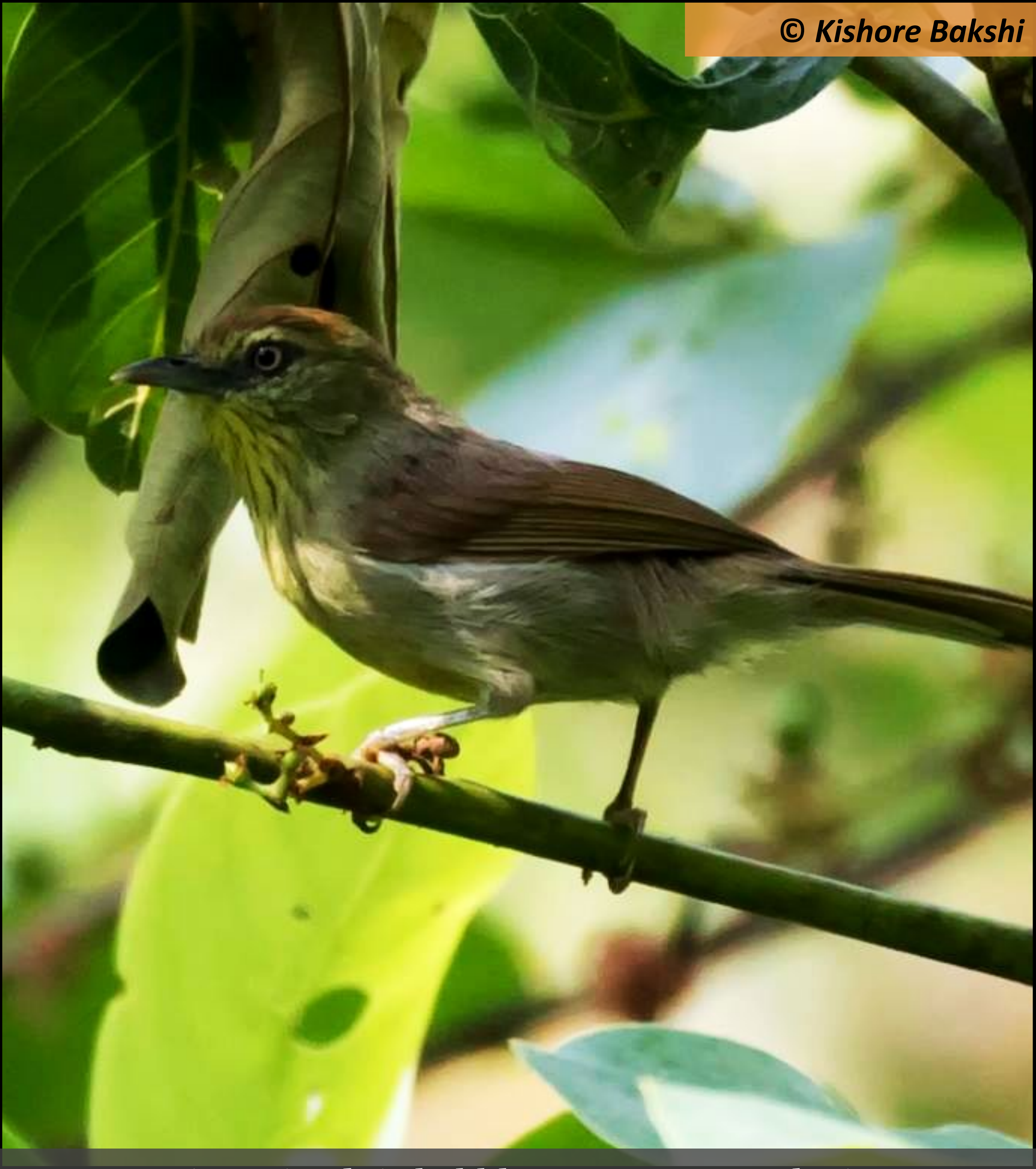
# Notable Sightings



© Sidhu Varma

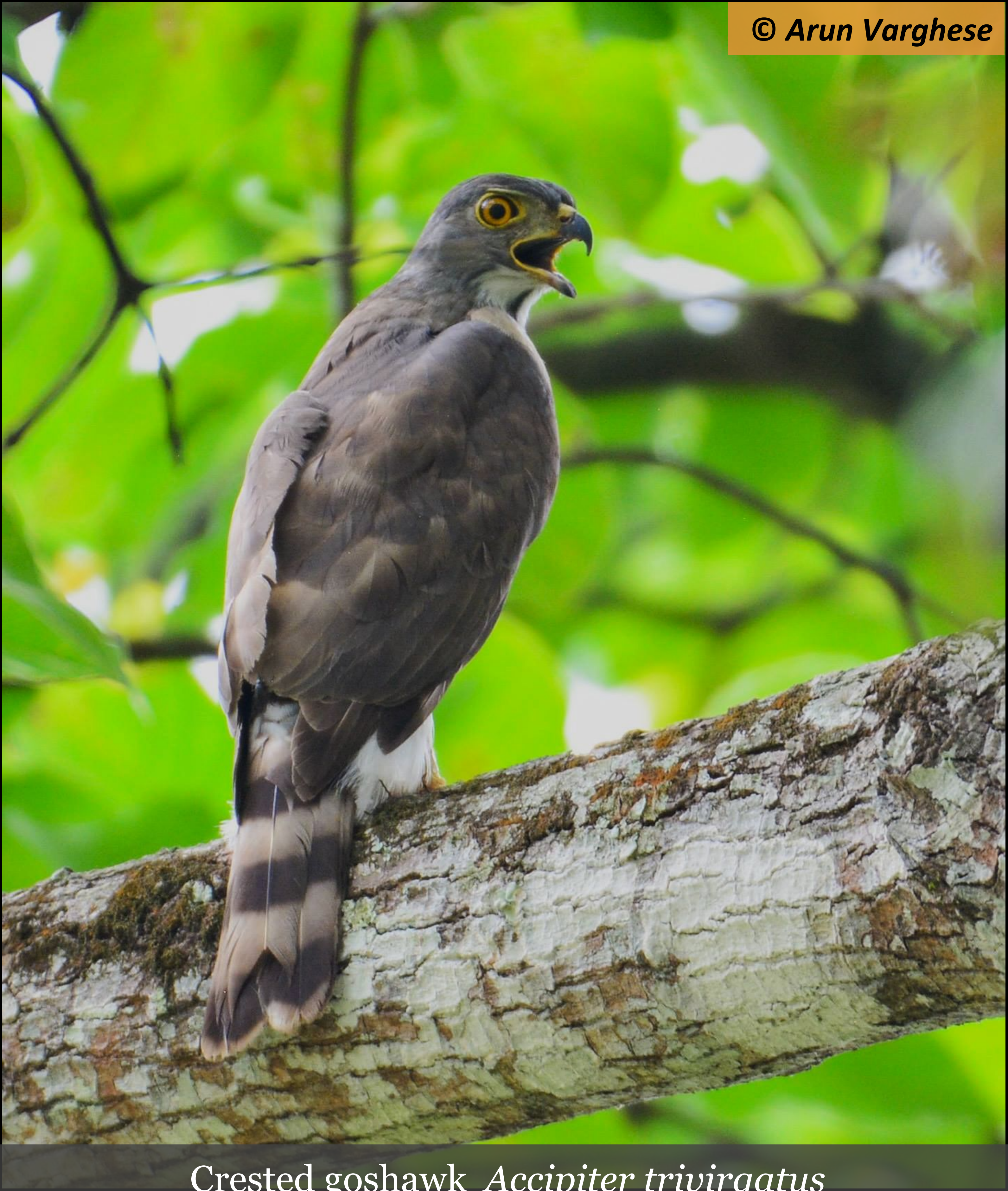
Green-billed malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis*
Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

# Notable Sightings


© Kishore Bakshi

Pin-striped tit-babbler *Macronus gularis*
Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

## Notable Sightings



© Arun Varghese

Crested goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*
Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

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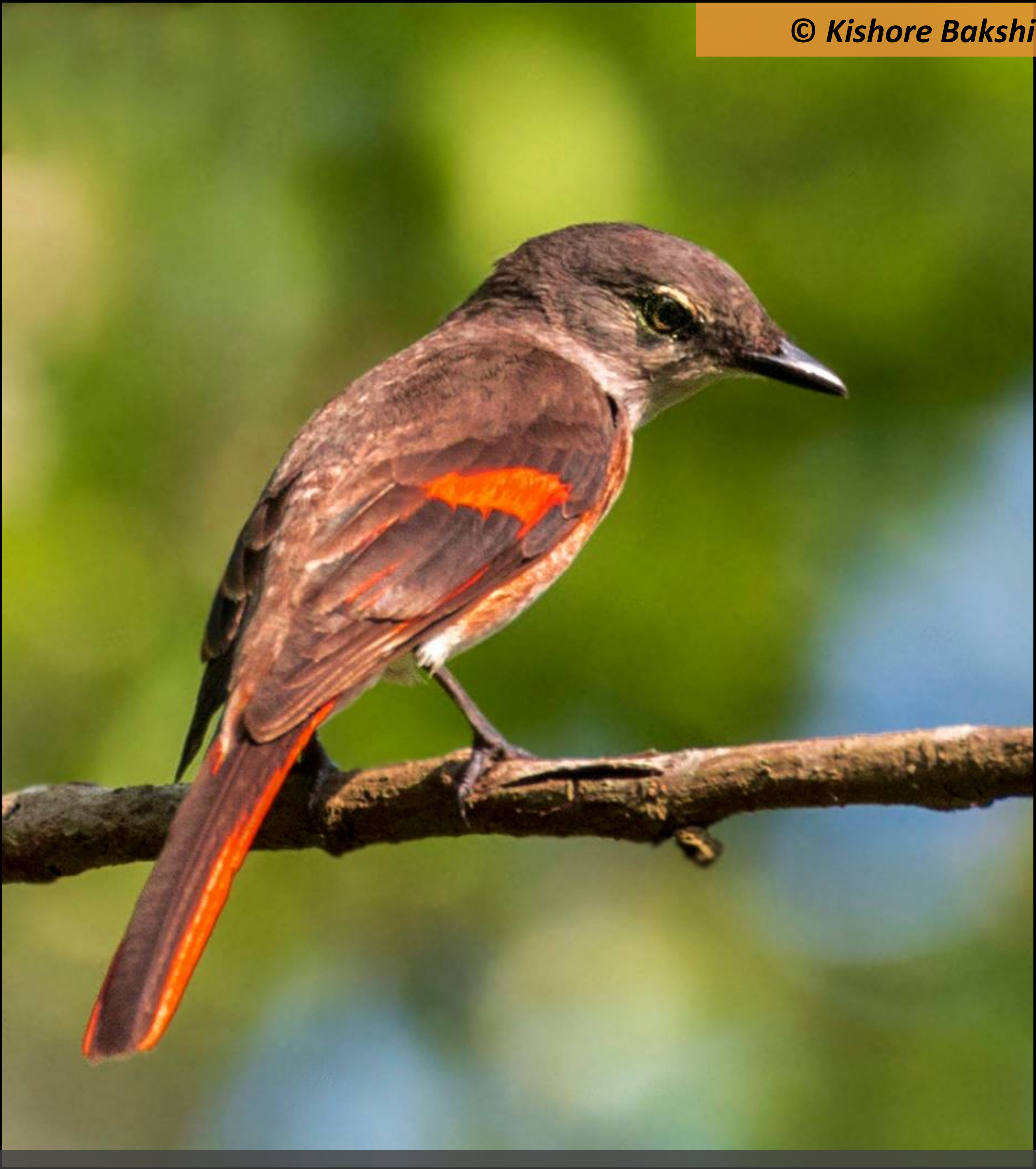

© Kishore Bakshi

Rosy minivet *Pericrocotus roseus*

Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

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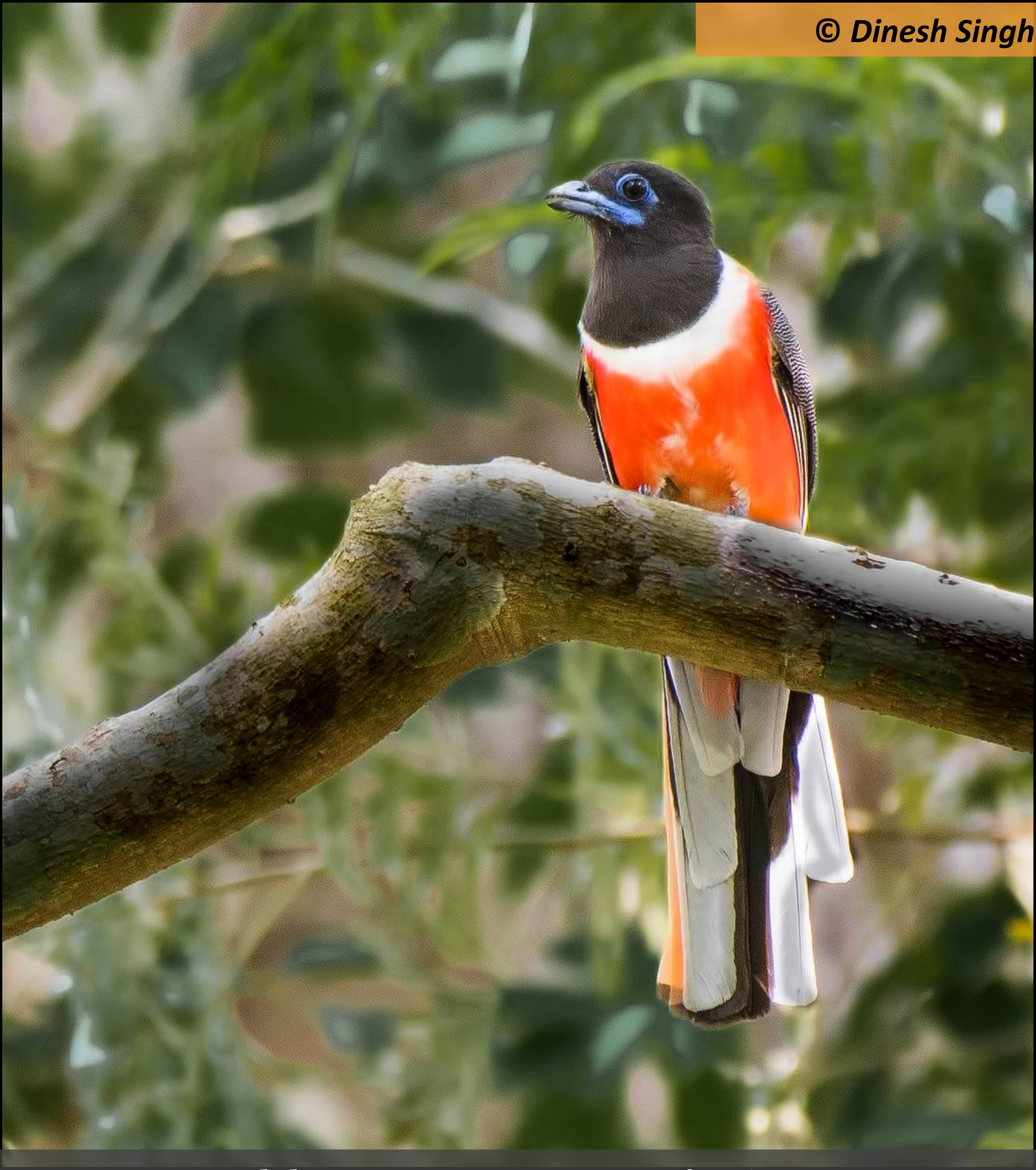

© Dinesh Singh

Malabar trogon *Harpactes fasciatus*

Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

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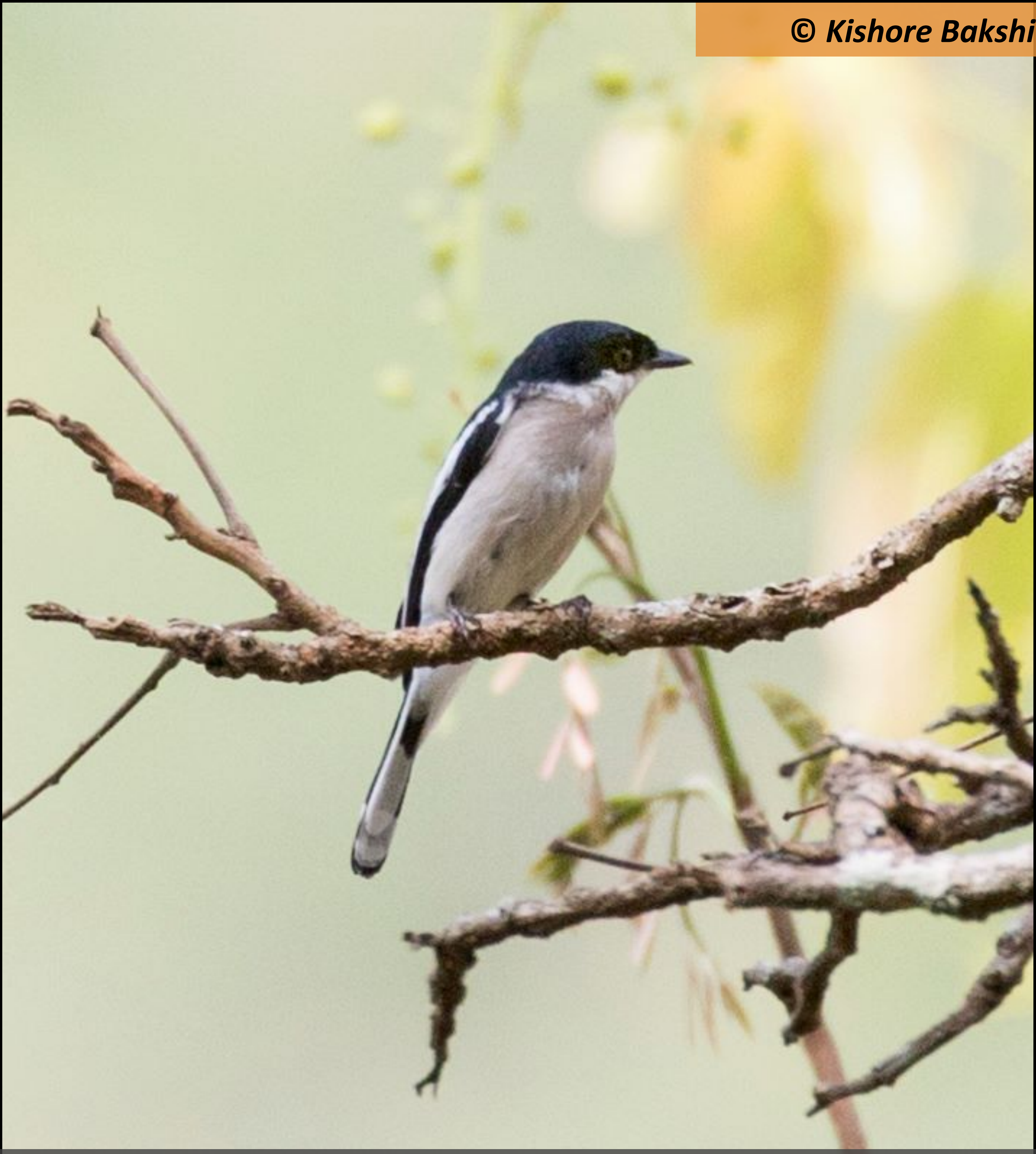

© Kishore Bakshi

Bar-winged flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus*
Maredumilli - Andhra Pradesh

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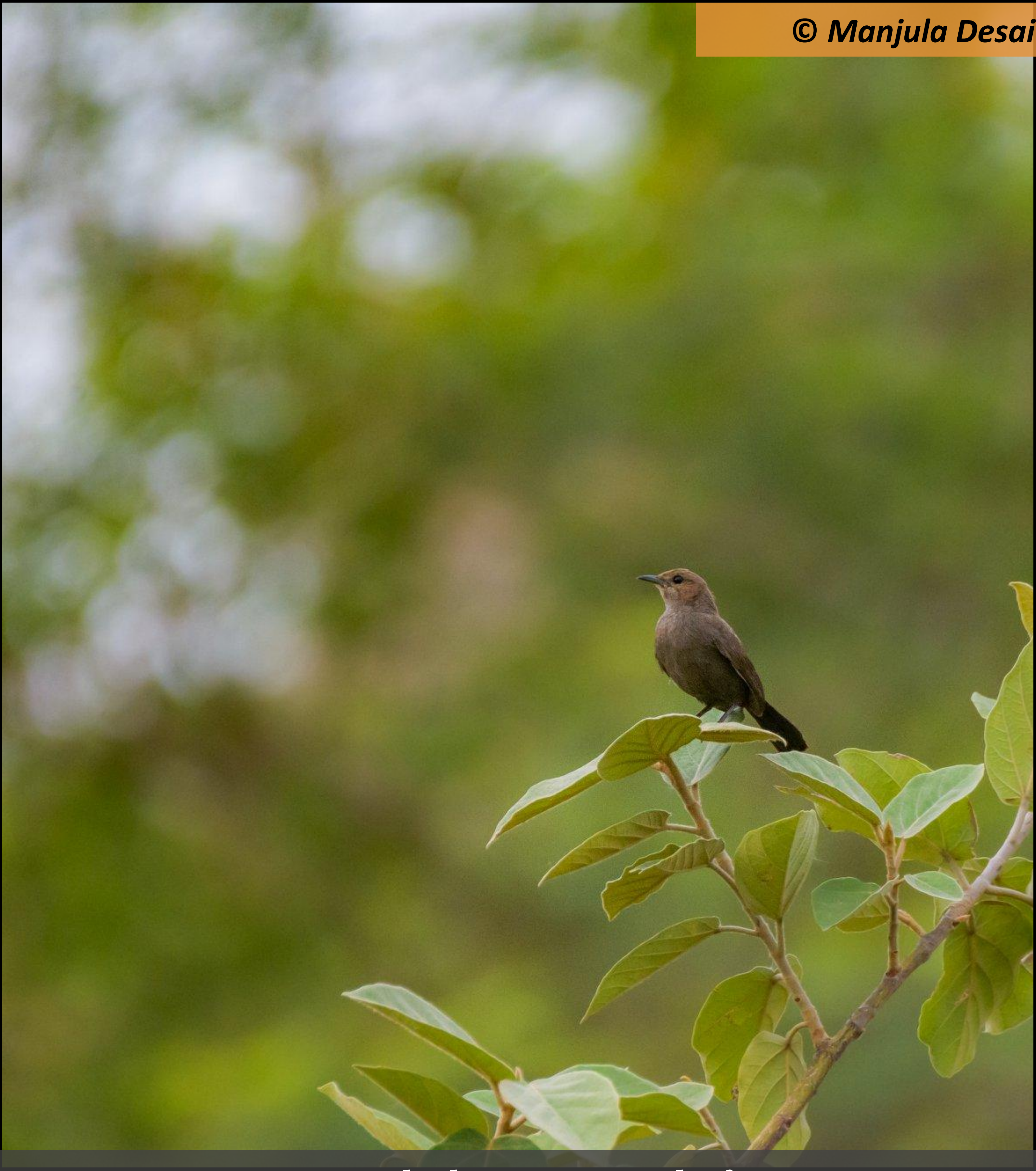

© Manjula Desai

Brown rock chat *Cercomela fusca*
Ameenpur Lake - Telangana

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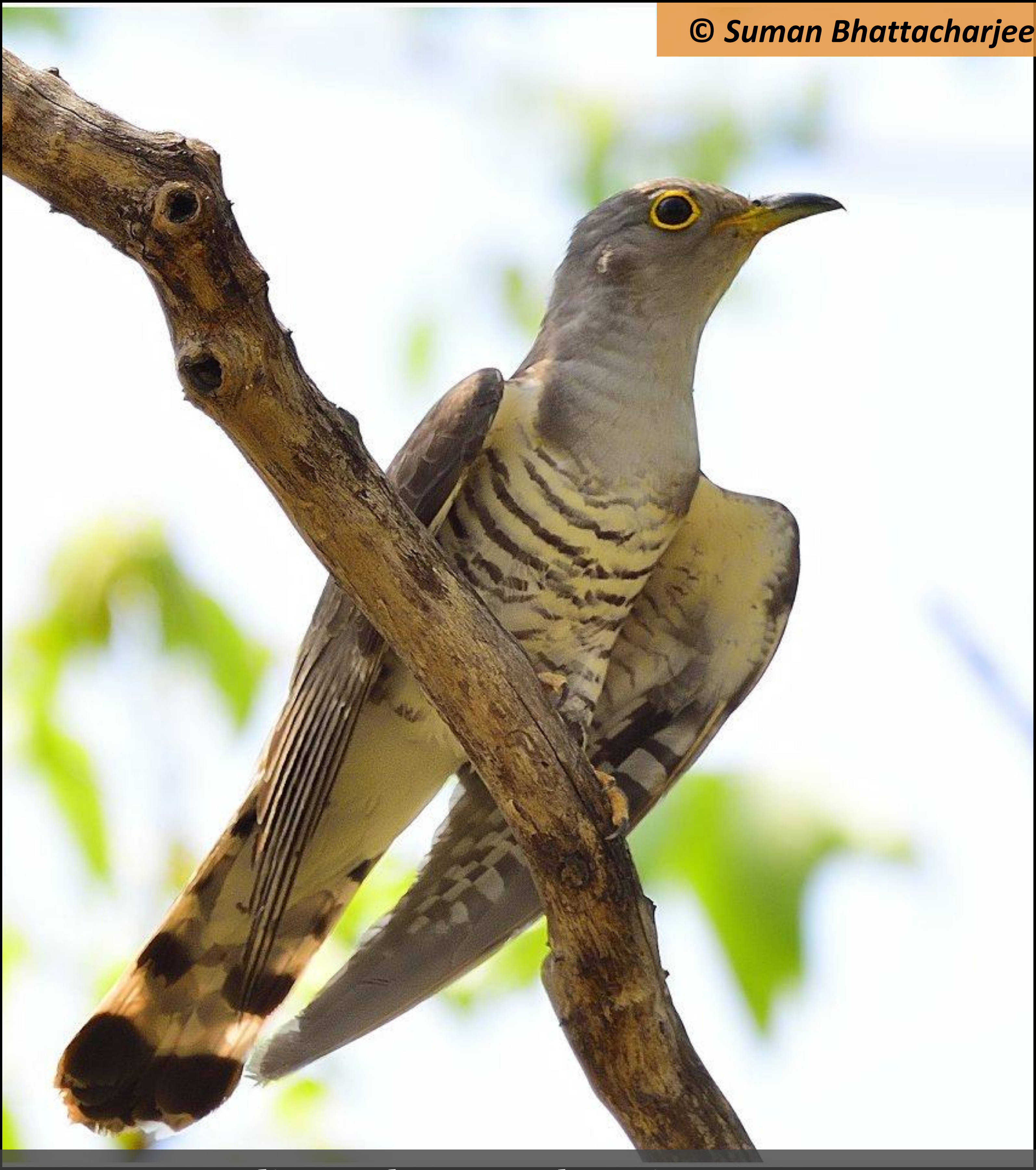
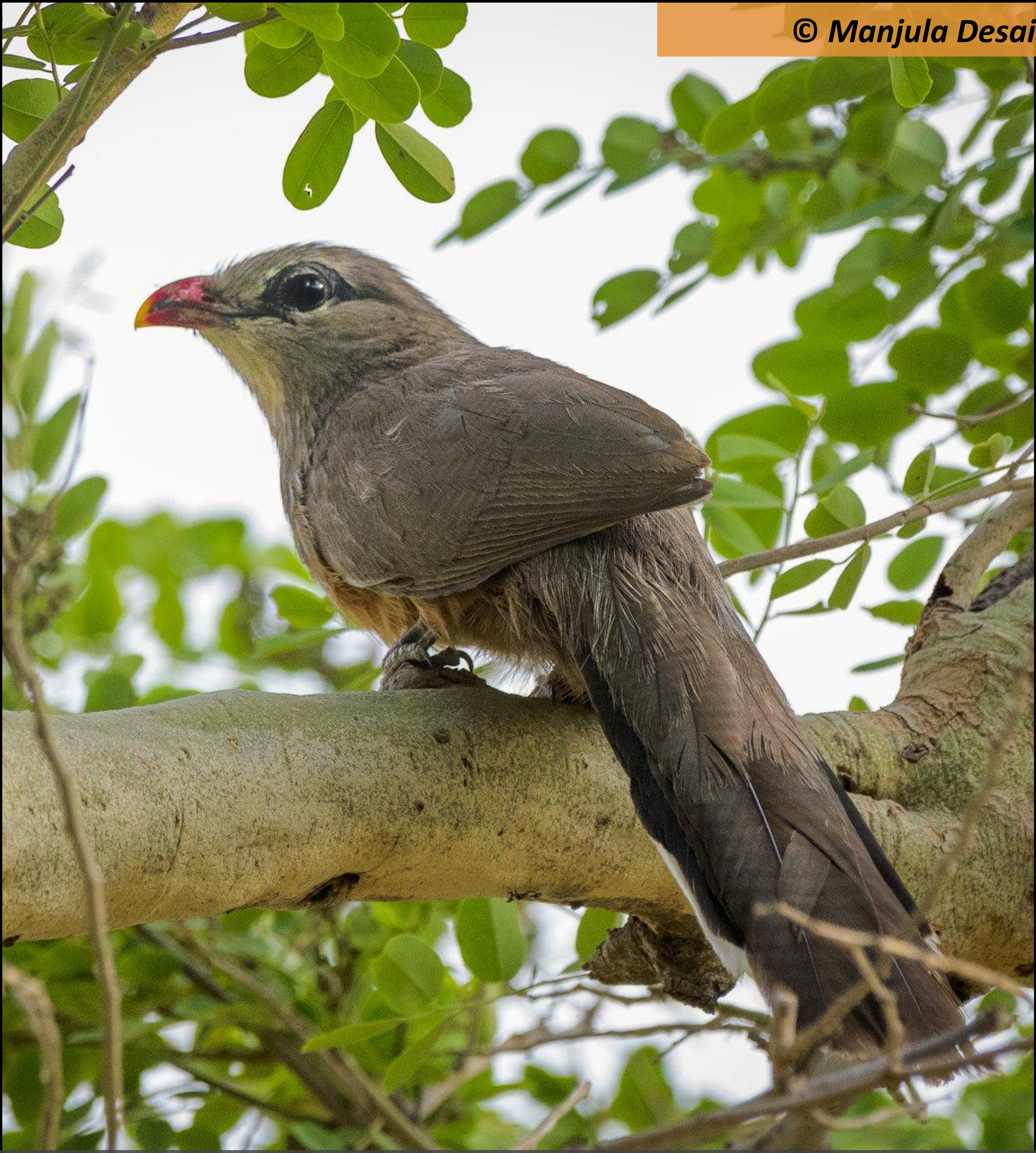


© Suman Bhattacharjee

Indian cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*
Amrabad Tiger Reserve, Telangana

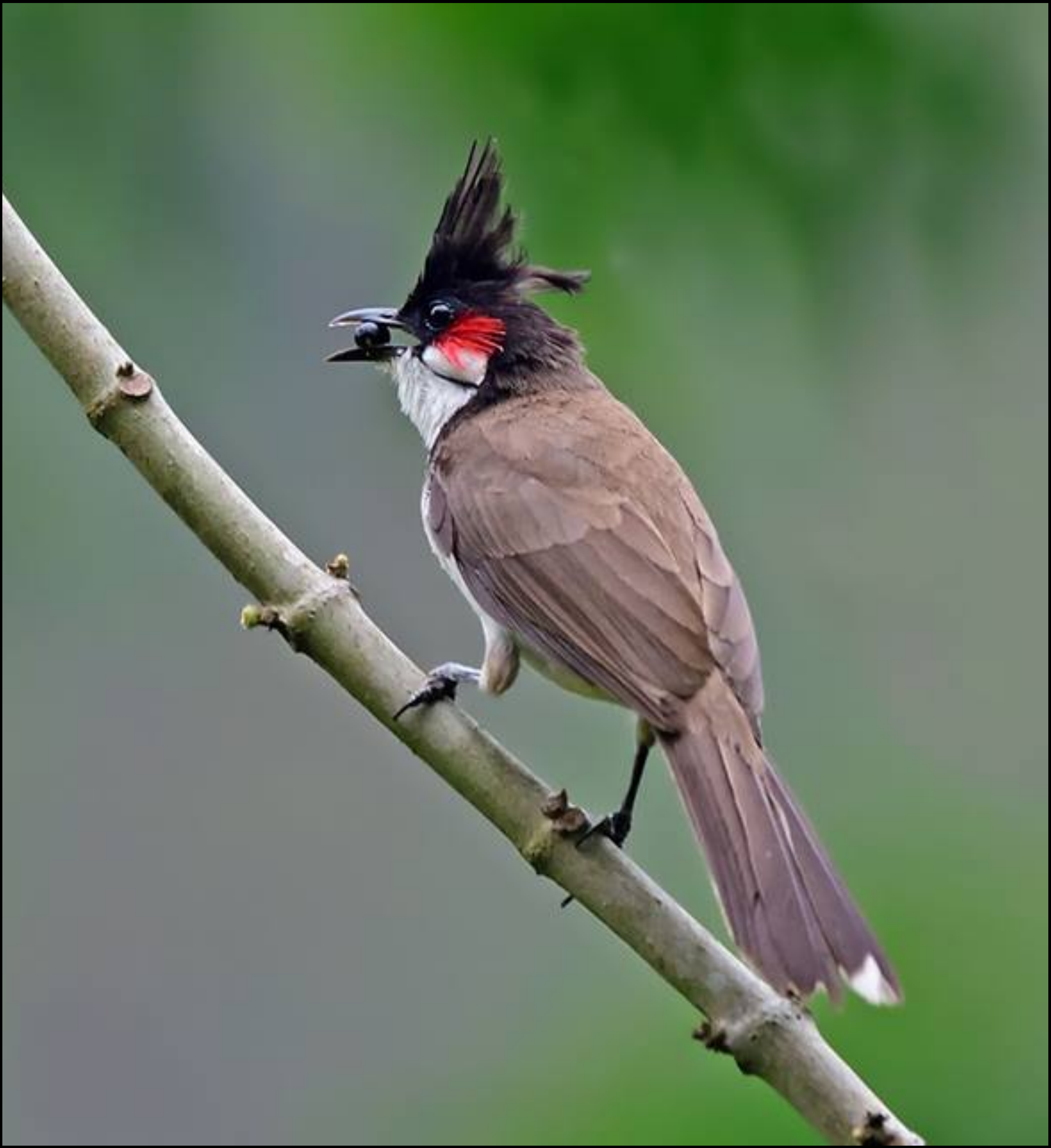
# Notable Sightings



© Manjula Desai

Sirkeer malkoha *Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii*
Umamaheshwaram, Telangana

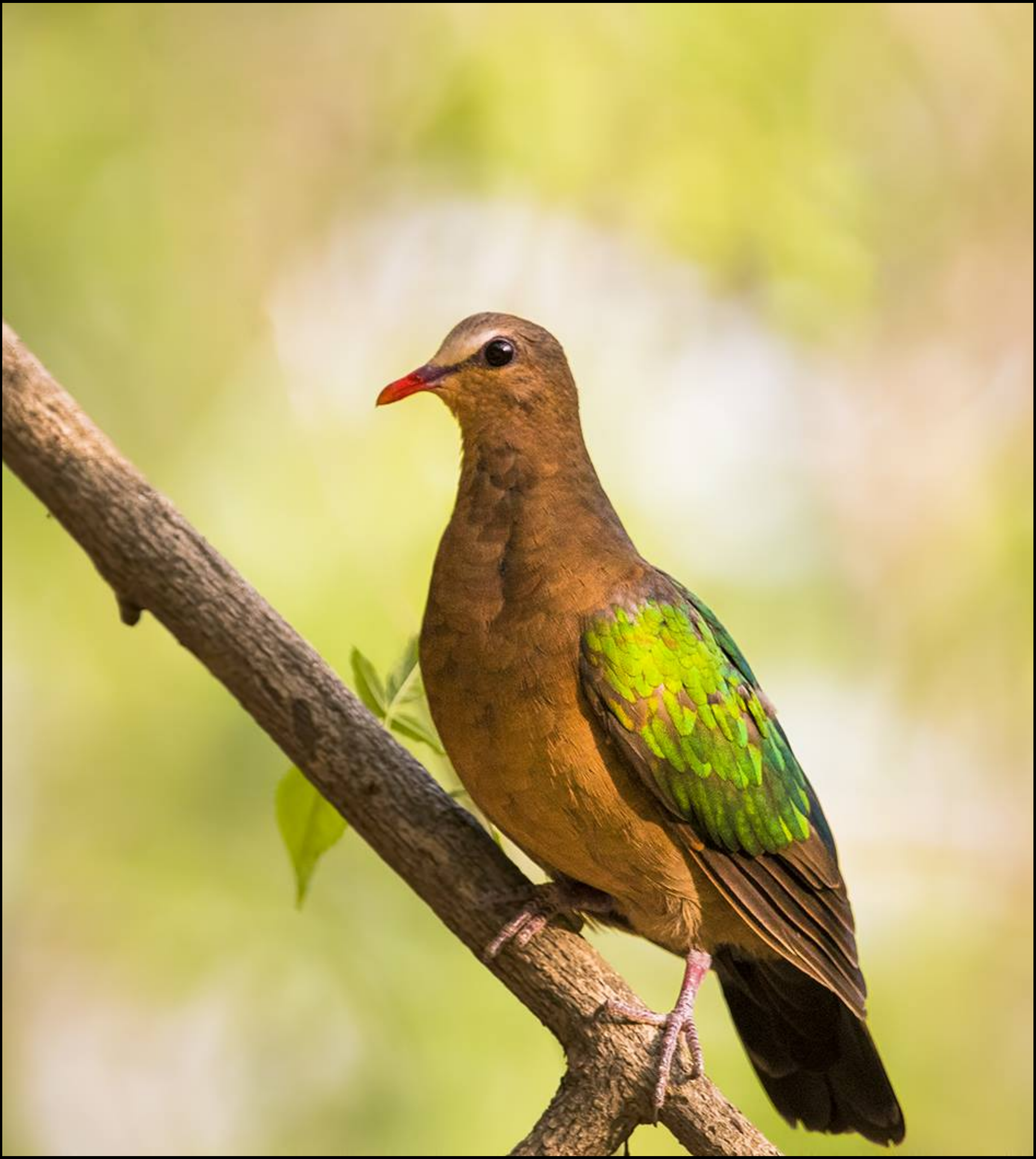
# Photographer’s Corner



**Red-whiskered bulbul *(Pycnonotus jocosus)***
**Maredumilli, Andhra Pradesh**

*© Sidhu Varma*

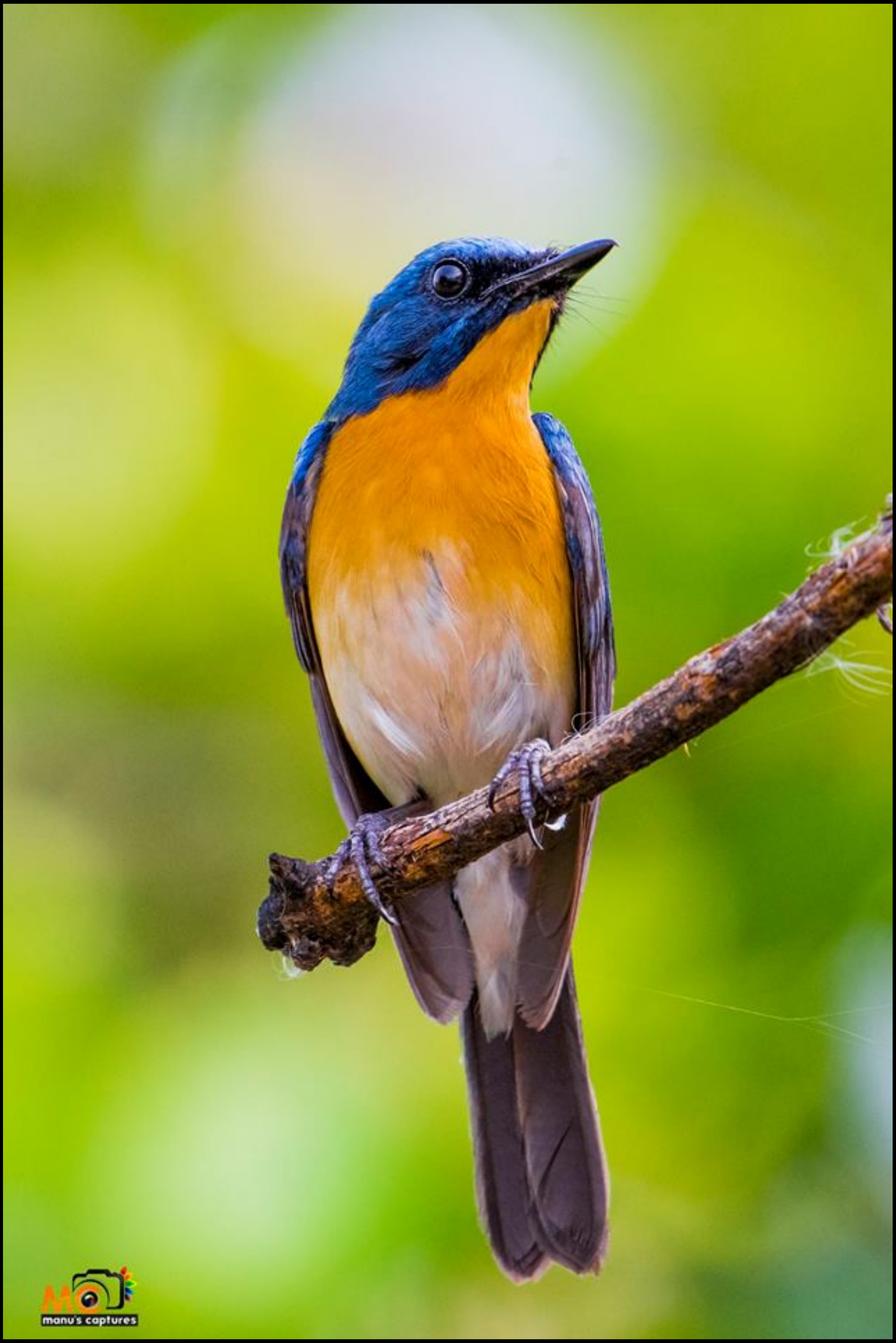
# Photographer's Corner



Common emerald dove *(Chalcophaps indica)*
Umamaheshwaram, Telangana

*© Ashwin Kadiyala*

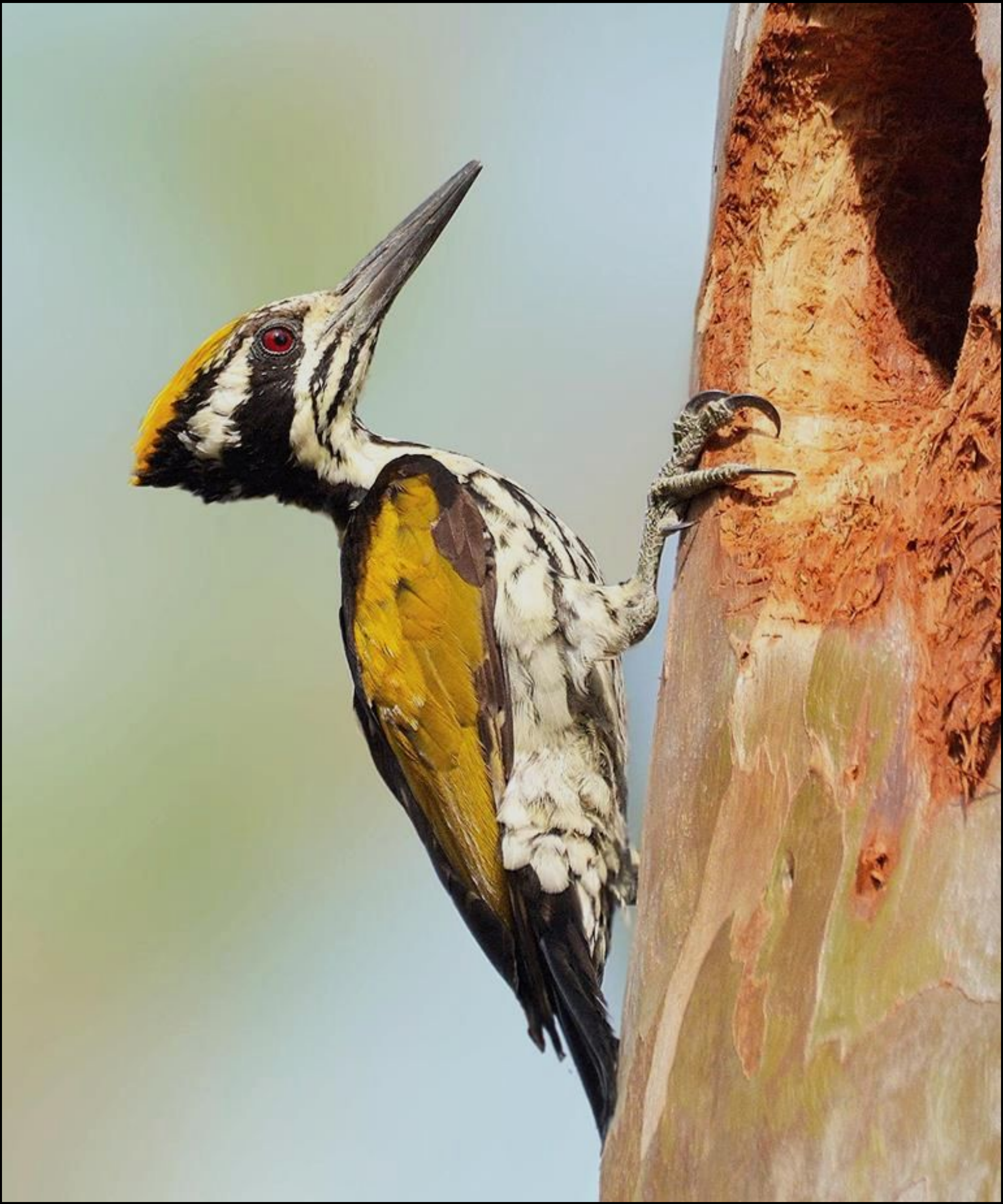
# Photographer’s Corner



Tickell's blue flycatcher *(Cyornis tickelliae)*
Madinaguda Lake, Hyderabad

© Manoj Kumar Vittapu

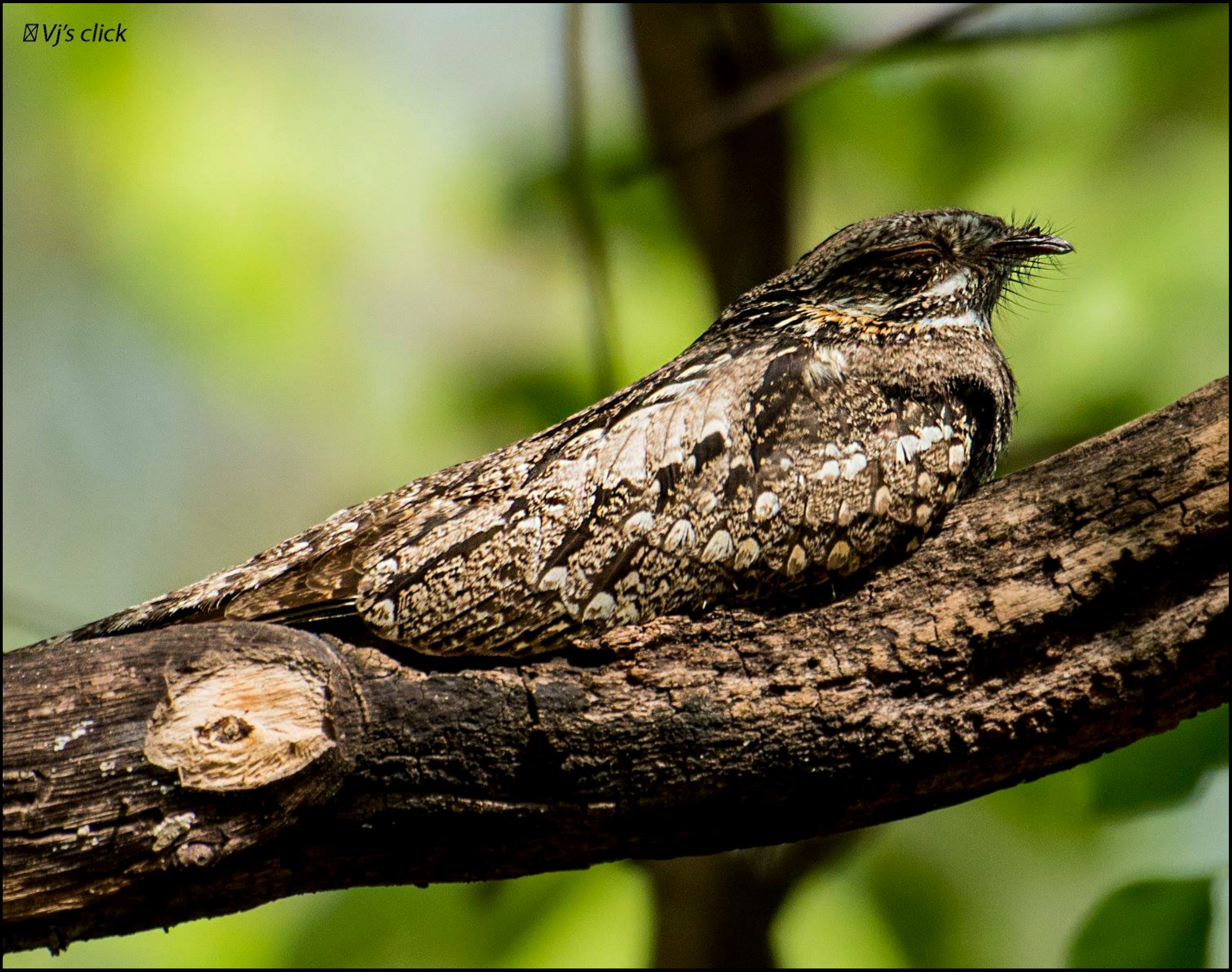
# Photographer's Corner



White-naped woodpecker (*Chrysocolaptes festivus*)
Anantagiri, Telangana

*© RK Balaji*

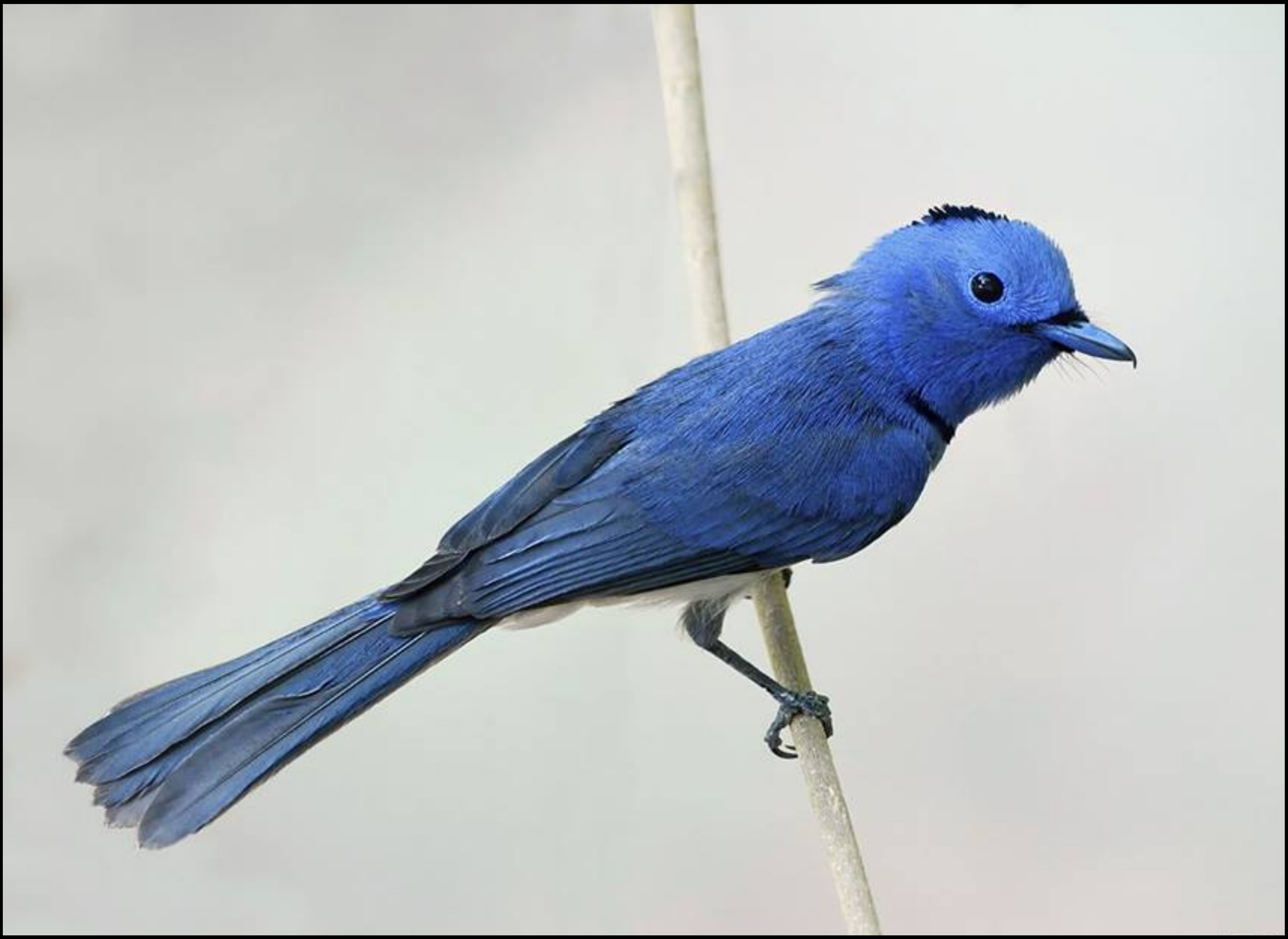
# Photographer's Corner



Jungle Nightjar (*Caprimulgus indicus*)
Anantagiri, Telangana

*© Dasari Vijay*

# Photographer's Corner



Black-naped monarch (*Hypothymis azurea)*
Anantagiri, Telangana

*© Sriram Reddy*

Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*
By RK Balaji

Hyderabad Birding Pals